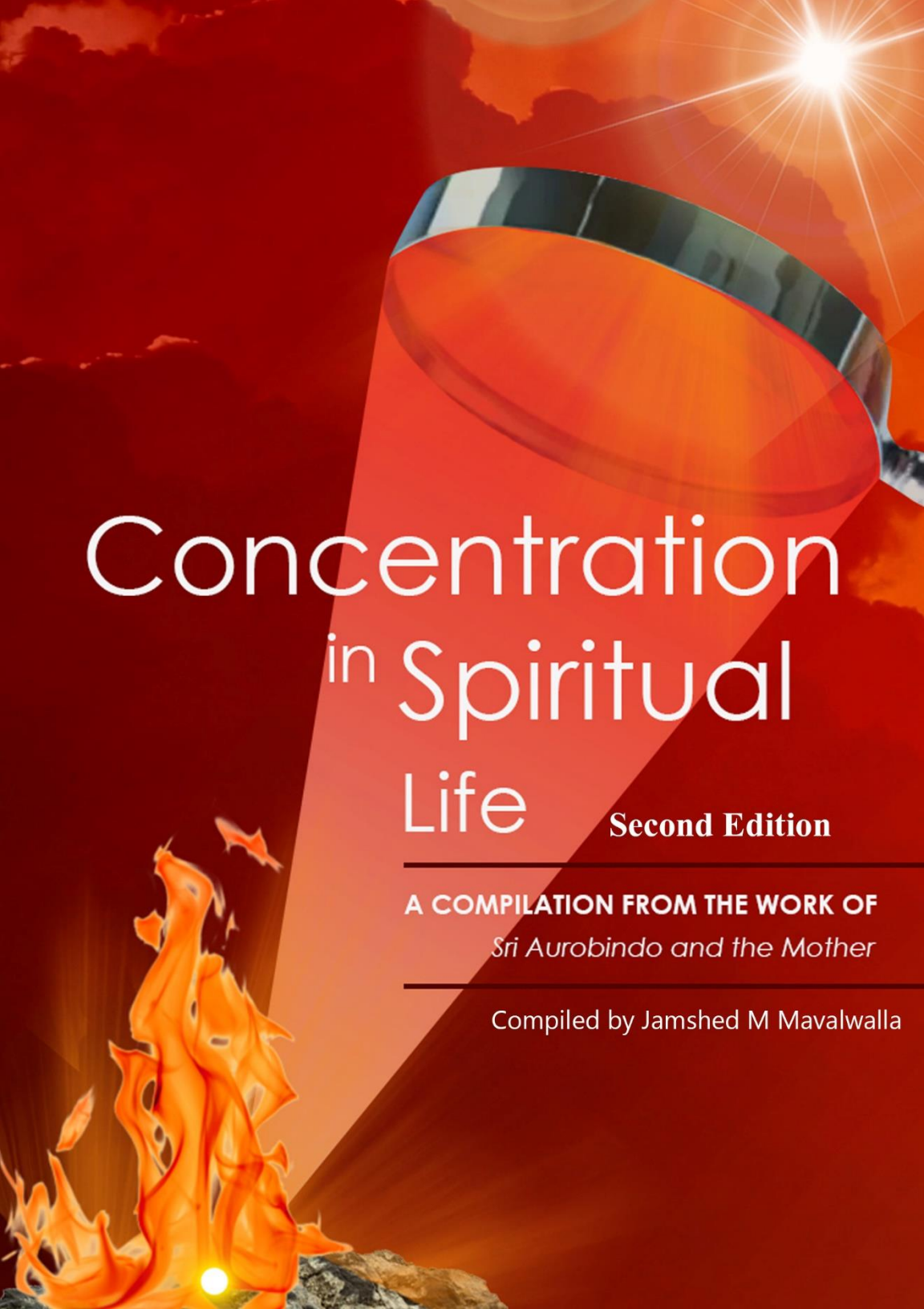

Concentration in Spiritual Life
Second Edition
A COMPILATION FROM THE WORK OF
Sri Aurobindo and the Mother
Compiled by Jamshed M Mavalwalla

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A Compilation from the Works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother

Sri Aurobindo Society
AUROPUBLICATIONS
POWERFUL THOUGHTS, INSPIRING VISION

Concentration in Spiritual Life

Second Edition

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The idea for the comprehensive compilation: Vijay bhai
Compiler: Jamshed M. Mavalwalla
Proofreading: Archana Udaykumar and Jayeeta Sen
Cover: Kavita Dutta, Bharat and Uttam Mondal
E-book: Uttam Mondal
Help in preparing the second edition: Uttam Mondal

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

In the series of comprehensive compilations, we present the importance and role of concentration in sadhana in this book *Concentration in Spiritual Life*.

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 a complete understanding of the role of concentration in spiritual life. 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—What Is Concentration

1.

"Concentration means fixing the consciousness in one place or on one object and in a single condition. Meditation can be diffusive, e.g. thinking about the Divine, receiving impressions and discriminating, watching what goes on in the nature and acting upon it etc." (CWSA 29: 297)

2.

"Concentration is a gathering together of the consciousness and either centralising at one point or turning on a single object, e.g.the Divine—there can also be a gathered condition throughout the whole being, not at a point. In meditation it is not indispensable to gather like this, one can simply remain with a quiet mind thinking of one subject or observing what comes in the consciousness and dealing with it." (CWSA 29: 297)

3.

"Concentration here means gathering of the consciousness into one centre and fixing it on one object or on one idea or in one condition." (CWSA 32: 610) (CWM 3: 301)

4.

"Concentration, for our Yoga, means when the consciousness is fixed in a particular state (e.g. peace) or

movement (e.g. aspiration, will, coming into contact with the Mother, taking the Mother's name); …" (CWSA 29: 297)

5.

"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)

6.

"To solve a problem, to learn a lesson, a lot of concentration and attention is needed, everyone knows that—an intellectual attention and concentration. But concentration is not only an intellectual thing, it may be found in all the activities of the being, including bodily activities." (CWM 4: 4)

7.

"It is not meditation (thinking with the mind) but a concentration or turning of the consciousness that is important,—and that can happen in work, in writing, in any kind of action as well as in sitting down to contemplate."

(CWSA 29: 222)

8.

"What is concentration?

It is to bring back all the scattered threads of consciousness to a single point, a single idea." (CWM 4: 5)

9.

"To concentrate means to be absorbed; …" (CWSA 12: 25)

10.

"Straining and concentration are not the same thing. Straining implies an over-eagerness and violence of effort, while concentration is in its nature quiet and steady. If there is restlessness or over-eagerness, then that is not concentration."(CWSA 29: 315)

11.

"Concentration does not aim for any effect, but is simple and persistent." (CWM 14: 50)

12.

"What I mean by subtle methods is psychological, non-mechanical processes—e.g. concentration in the heart, surrender, self-purification, working out by inner means the change of the consciousness." (CWSA 30: 42)

13.

"Sometimes we look fixedly at a point; one forgets everything at that moment and if there is a noise one is disturbed. What is this state?

Concentration! It is exactly the very principle of concentration." (CWM 5: 398)

II—Concentration Is an Image of the Divine Tapas

1.

"In order that we may do this, the terms concentration and Samadhi must assume for us a richer and profound meaning. All our concentration is merely an image of the divine Tapas by which the Self dwells gathered in itself, by which it manifests within itself, by which it maintains and possesses its manifestation, by which it draws back from all manifestation into its supreme oneness. Being dwelling in consciousness upon itself for bliss, this is the divine Tapas; and a Knowledge-Will dwelling in force of consciousness on itself and its manifestations is the essence of the divine concentration, the Yoga of the Lord of Yoga. Given the self-differentiation of the Divine in which we dwell, concentration is the means by which the individual soul identifies itself with and enters into any form, state or psychological self-manifestation (*bhāva*) of the Self. To use this means for unification with the Divine is the condition for the attainment of divine knowledge and the principle of all Yoga of knowledge." (CWSA 23: 320–321)

2.

"Sadhana is the practice of Yoga. Tapasya is the concentration of the will to get the results of sadhana and to conquer the lower nature." (CWSA 29: 215)

3.

"Man, because he is a thinking being, first gets an idea, then he invests this idea with a force, a vital power, a power for action, and changes it, transforms it into will. This will is then concentrated on the object to be realised, and with the vital force and effort added to the thought, the conception, it becomes the lever of action." (CWM 8: 359–360)

4.

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

To will it is a constant, sustained, concentrated aspiration, an almost exclusive occupation of the consciousness. This is the first step." (CWM 4: 244)

5.

"The action of the (Divine) Force does not exclude tapasya, concentration and the need of sadhana. Its action rather comes as an answer or a help to these things. It is true that it sometimes acts without them; it very often wakes a response in those who have not prepared themselves and do not seem to be ready. But it does not always or usually act like that, nor is it a sort of magic that acts in the void or without any process. Nor is it a machine which acts in

the same way on everybody or in all conditions and circumstances; it is not a physical but a spiritual Force and its action cannot be reduced to rules." (CWSA 29: 187–188)

6.

"… tapas is the basis of all concentration of chit, …" (CWSA 16: 481)

7.

"We have in our philosophy no exact synonym of the English word Will, because Will to us, as opposed to mere wish, *ichchhá*, is simply Conscious Force; it is Shakti or, more precisely, Chit-shakti, & its nature in action is Tapas or the concentration of consciousness on action & its object or its results. Now the nature of Agni, kratu or active power is precisely this Tapas or Chit-shakti, Conscious Being in concentration of action. It is then by Tapas or Will that Agni creates in us Knowledge." (CWSA 16: 715)

8.

"Agni, therefore, is master of tejas, especially fiery tejas, and the agent of the sahaituka tapas in the mind. In the language of modern psychology, this sahaituka tapas is Will in action, —not desire, but Will embracing desire and exceeding it. It is not even choice, wish or intention. Will, in the Vedic idea, is essentially knowledge taking the form

of force. Agni, therefore, is purely mental force, necessary to all concentration. Once we perceive this Vedic conception, we realise the immense importance of Agni and are in a position to understand the hymn we are studying." (CWSA 16: 474)

9.

"Brain concentration is always a tapasya and necessarily brings a strain. It is only if one is lifted out of the brain mind altogether that the strain of mental concentration disappears." (CWSA 29: 311)

10.

"But one doesn't know how to will it. In fact one doesn't even want to. These are velleities: 'Well, it is like this.... It would be good if it were like that... yes, it would be better if it were like that... yes, it would be preferable if it were like that.' But *this* is not to will. And always there at the back, hidden somewhere in a corner of the brain, is something which is looking on and saying, 'Oh, why should I want that? After all one can as well want the opposite.' And to try, you see... Not like that, just wait... But one can always find a thousand excuses to do the opposite. And ah, just a tiny little wavering is enough... pftt... the thing swoops down and there it is. But if one *wills,* if one really *knows* that *this* is the thing, and truly wants this, and if one is *oneself* entirely concentrated in the will, I say that there

is *nothing* in the world that can prevent one from doing it, from doing it or being obliged to do it. It depends on what it is." (CWM 6: 347)

11.

"But the will is something altogether different. It is the capacity to concentrate on everything one does, do it as best one can and not stop doing it unless one receives a very precise intimation that it is finished." (CWM 5: 46)

12.

"In the infinity of being and its infinite awareness concentration of consciousness, Tapas, is always present as an inherent power of Consciousness-Force: it is a self-held or self-gathered dwelling of the eternal Awareness in itself and on itself or on its object; but the object is always in some way itself, its own being or a manifestation and movement of its being." (CWSA 22: 603–604)

13.

"Concentration in this sense of self-held dwelling in itself or on itself as object may be said then to belong to the very nature of conscious being." (CWSA 22: 604)

14.

For, although there is an infinite extension of consciousness and a diffusion of consciousness, it is a self-

held self-contained extension or a self-held self-contained diffusion. Although there may seem to be a dispersion of its energies, that is in reality a form of distribution, and is only possible in a superficial field because it is supported by an underlying self-held concentration. An exclusive concentration on or in a single subject or object or domain of being or movement is not a denial or departure from the Spirit's awareness, it is one form of the self-gathering of the power of Tapas. But when the concentration is exclusive, it brings about a holding back behind it of the rest of self-knowledge. It may be aware of the rest all the time, yet act as if it were not aware of it; that would not be a state or act of Ignorance: but if the consciousness erects by the concentration a wall of exclusion limiting itself to a single field, domain or habitation in the movement so that it is aware only of that or aware of all the rest as outside itself, then we have a principle of self-limiting knowledge which can result in a separative knowledge and culminate in a positive and effective ignorance.(CWSA 22: 604)

15.

"In this superficial man Tapas, the being's dynamic force of consciousness, is concentrated on the surface in a certain mass of superficial workings; all the rest of itself it has put behind and may be vaguely aware of it there in the unformulated back of its conscious existence, but is not

aware of it in this superficial absorbed movement in front." (CWSA 22: 605)

III—Why Is Concentration Needed in Life

1.

"The mind, if not controlled, is something wavering and imprecise. If one doesn't have the habit of concentrating it upon something, it goes on wandering all the time. It goes on without a stop anywhere and wanders into a *world* of vagueness. And then, when one wants to fix one's attention, it hurts! There is a little effort there, like this: 'Oh! how tiring it is, it hurts!' So one does not do it. And one lives in a kind of cloud. And your head is like a cloud; it's like that, most brains are like clouds: there is no precision, no exactitude, no clarity, it is hazy—vague and hazy. You have impressions rather than a knowledge of things. You live in an approximation, and you can keep within you all sorts of contradictory ideas made up mostly of impressions, sensations, feelings, emotions—all sorts of things like that which have very little to do with thought and... which are just vague ramblings." (CWM 8: 181–182)

2.

"But if you want to succeed in having a precise, concrete, clear, definite thought on a certain subject, you must make an effort, gather yourself together, hold yourself firm, concentrate. And the first time you do it, it literally hurts, it is tiring! But if you don't make a habit of it, all your life you will be living in a state of irresolution. And when it

comes to practical things, when you are faced with—for, in spite of everything, one is always faced with—a number of problems to solve, of a very practical kind, well, instead of being able to take up the elements of the problem, to put them all face to face, look at the question from every side, and rising above and seeing the solution, instead of that you will be tossed about in the swirls of something grey and uncertain, and it will be like so many spiders running around in your head—but you won't succeed in catching the thing.

I am speaking of the simplest of problems, you know; I am not speaking of deciding the fate of the world or humanity, or even of a country—nothing of the kind. I am speaking of the problems of your daily life, of every day. They become something quite woolly.

Well, it is to avoid this that you are told, when your brain is in course of being formed, 'Instead of letting it be shaped by such habits and qualities, try to give it a little exactitude, precision, capacity of concentration, of choosing, deciding, putting things in order, try to use your reason.'

Of course, it is well understood that reason is not the supreme capacity of man and must be surpassed, but it is quite obvious that if you don't have it, you will live an altogether incoherent life, you won't even know how to behave rationally. The least thing will upset you completely and you won't even know why, and still less how to remedy

it. While someone who has established within himself a state of active, clear reasoning, can face attacks of all kinds, emotional attacks or any trials whatever; for life is entirely made up of these things—unpleasantness, vexations—which are small but proportionate to the one who feels them, and so naturally felt by him as very big because they are proportionate to him. Well, reason can stand back a little, look at all that, smile and say, 'Oh! no, one must not make a fuss over such a small thing'." (CWM 8: 182–183)

3.

"One can feel this very clearly when one wants to organise one's life, for instance—to put the different elements in their place in one's existence. There is a certain intellectual faculty which immediately puts each thing in its place and makes a plan and organises. And it is not a knowledge that comes from the mind, it is a knowledge which comes, as I said, from the mystic depths of the soul or from a higher consciousness; and the mind concentrates it in the physical world and organises it to give a basis of action to the higher consciousness.

One has this experience very clearly when one wants to organise one's life." (CWM 8: 189)

4.

"And if your power of concentration is complete, then there is not a problem you cannot solve—I don't mean arithmetic

problems (*laughter*), I mean problems about leading one's life, about decisions to be taken, psychological problems which need solving. There is not one that can resist this power of concentration." (CWM 5: 398–399)

IV—Mastery in Any Domain Demands Great Concentration

1.

"This mastery, in whatever domain it may be, vital, mental, overmental, demands assiduous effort and a great concentration." (CWM 16: 234–235)

2.

"Without concentration one cannot achieve anything." (CWM 12: 135)

3.

"It is said that the faculty of concentrated attention is at the source of all successful activity. Indeed the capacity and value of a man can be measured by his capacity of concentrated attention. [Generally this concentration comes through interest and a special attraction for a subject.]

In order to obtain this concentration, it is generally recommended to reduce one's activities, to make a choice and confine oneself to this choice alone, so as not to disperse one's energy and attention. For the normal man, this method is good, sometimes even indispensable. But one can imagine something better." (CWM 14: 51)

4.

"*In our arithmetic class we would like to be given some homework to do.*

If only you could write French a little more correctly!

You may do some homework if you really want to—but it is better to do a little well than to do much without care or concentration.

If you want to be able to do anything at all, you must learn to discipline yourselves and to concentrate." (CWM 12: 198)

5.

"Moreover, whatever you may want to do in life, one thing is absolutely indispensable and at the basis of *everything*, the capacity of concentrating the attention. If you are able to gather together the rays of attention and consciousness on one point and can maintain this concentration with a persistent will, *nothing* can resist it—whatever it may be, from the most material physical development to the highest spiritual one. But this discipline must be followed in a constant and, it may be said, imperturbable [calm, composed] way; not that you should always be concentrated on the same thing—that's not what I mean, I mean learning to concentrate.

And materially, for studies, sports, all physical or mental development, it is absolutely indispensable. And the

value of an individual is proportionate to the value of his attention. …

There is nothing in the human or even in the superhuman field, to which the power of concentration is not the key.

You can be the best athlete, you can be the best student, you can be an artistic, literary or scientific genius, you can be the greatest saint with that faculty. And everyone has in himself a tiny little beginning of it—it is given to everybody, but people do not cultivate it." (CWM 9: 360–361)

6.

"*Here our activities are so varied that it is difficult to stick to one thing and perfect it. Perhaps that is the reason why we are not able to go beyond a mediocre average. Or is it because of our lack of solid concentration?*

The cause of mediocre work is neither the variety nor the number of activities, but lack of the power of concentration.

One must learn to concentrate and do everything with full concentration." (CWM 12: 387) (CWM 16: 260)

7.

"Concentration on a precise goal is helpful to development." (CWM 14: 50)

8.

"The more we concentrate on the goal, the more it blossoms forth and becomes precise." (CWM 14: 50)

9.

"Only the degree of concentration on the goal can shorten the way." (CWM 10: 26)

10.

"As for James' statement *[The correspondent wrote: "Prof. James even says [in Principles of Psychology] about he 'social me' and other 'me's, that one has to suppress several of them in order to achieve one or two main aims in life. A politician, in order to concentrate on politics alone, has to let go his tendency for music or painting or social fame or family affections."]* it is of course true except in so far as the politician can indulge in other things as hobbies for his leisure hours, but if he wants to succeed as a politician he must give his best energies to politics. Conversely if Shakespeare or Newton had spent part of their energies in politics they would not have been able to reach such heights in poetry and in science or even if they had they would have done much less. The main energies have to be concentrated on one thing; the others can only be minor pursuits at leisure or for distraction or interests rather than pursuits useful for keeping up a general culture."(CWSA 29: 16)

11.

"The human vital is almost always of that nature [*full of desires and fancies*], but that is no reason why one should accept it as an unchangeable fact and allow a restless vital to drive one as it likes. Even apart from Yoga, in ordinary life, only those are considered to have full manhood or are likely to succeed in their life, their ideals or their undertakings who take in hand this restless vital, concentrate and control it and subject it to discipline. It is by the use of the mental will that they discipline it, compelling it to do not what it wants but what the reason or the will sees to be right or desirable. In Yoga one uses the inner will and compels the vital to submit itself to tapasya so that it may become calm, strong, obedient—or else one calls down the calm from above obliging the vital to renounce desire and become quiet and receptive." (CWSA 31: 105)

12.

"Take an example. You are in your body with your deepest ideal but you find yourself before a school class and you have to teach something to the students. Well, this light is up there, this light of consciousness, but when you have to explain to your class the science you have to teach, is it more convenient to have a fund of knowledge or will the inspiration be such that you will not need this fund of knowledge? What is your personal experience?... You find,

don't you, that there are days when everything goes well—you are eloquent, your students listen to you and understand you easily. But there are other days when what you have to teach does not come, they do not listen to you—that is, you are bored and are boring. This means that in the former case your consciousness is awake and concentrated upon what you are doing, while in the second it is more or less asleep—you are left to your most external means. But in this case, if you have a fund of knowledge you can tell your students something; if you have a mind trained, prepared, a good instrument responding well when you want to make use of it, and if you have also gathered all necessary notes and notions all will go very well. But if you have nothing in your head and, besides, you are not in contact with your higher consciousness, then you have no other recourse than to take a book and read out your lesson—you will be obliged to make use of someone else's mind." (CWM 4: 41)

13.

"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)

14.

"Yogic method, also, being careful of the different natures of men, suits itself to their limitations, becomes selective and concentrates upon one of these conditions or another." (CWSA 12: 341)

V—Yoga Is Concentrated Conscious Evolution of the Being

1.

"Yoga is a rapid and concentrated conscious evolution of the being, but however rapid, even though it may effect in a single life what in an unassisted Nature might take centuries and millenniums or many hundreds of lives, still all evolution must move by stages; even the greatest rapidity and concentration of the movement cannot swallow up all the stages or reverse natural process and bring the end near to the beginning. A hasty and ignorant mind, a too eager force easily forget this necessity; they rush forward to make the supermind an immediate aim and expect to pull it down with a pitchfork from its highest heights in the Infinite. This is not only an absurd expectation but full of danger. For the vital desire may very well bring in an action of dark or vehement vital powers which hold out before it a promise of immediate fulfilment of its impossible longing; the consequence is likely to be a plunge into many kinds of self-deception, a yielding to the falsehoods and temptations of the forces of darkness, a hunt for supernormal powers, a turning away from the Divine to the Asuric nature, a fatal self-inflation into an unnatural unhuman and undivine bigness of magnified ego." (CWSA 23: 282)

2.

"Thirdly, the divine Power in us uses all life as the means of this integral Yoga. Every experience and outer contact with our world-environment, however trifling or however disastrous, is used for the work, and every inner experience, even to the most repellent suffering or the most humiliating fall, becomes a step on the path to perfection. And we recognise in ourselves with opened eyes the method of God in the world, His purpose of light in the obscure, of might in the weak and fallen, of delight in what is grievous and miserable. We see the divine method to be the same in the lower and in the higher working; only in the one it is pursued tardily and obscurely through the subconscious in Nature, in the other it becomes swift and self-conscious and the instrument confesses the hand of the Master. All life is a Yoga of Nature seeking to manifest God within itself. Yoga marks the stage at which this effort becomes capable of self-awareness and therefore of right completion in the individual. It is a gathering up and concentration of the movements dispersed and loosely combined in the lower evolution." (CWSA 23: 47)

3.

"In brief, this is what yoga means. Yoga helps you to become fully conscious of your destiny, that is, your mission in the universe, and not only at the present

moment but what it was in the past and what it will be in the future. And because of this knowledge you can gather by a concentration of the consciousness all these experiences in a very short time and gain lives, do in a few years what could take a fairly considerable number of lives to achieve. The psychic being goes progressively through all these experiences towards its full maturity and complete independence, its liberation—in the sense that it no longer needs any new life. If it wants to come back to the physical world, it returns, because it has something to do there and it chooses freely to return." (CWM 6: 448)

4.

"You become more and more attentive, and exactly to the extent you become more attentive and more sincere, you feel in what direction, in what movement this divine Consciousness is working, and you give yourself to it wholly. The thing ripens more quickly. And in this way you are truly able to do in a few minutes the work that would otherwise take years. And that is the goal of yoga: one can do the work in a few hours, in a concentrated, shortened time; one can do in another way what Nature is doing—Nature will do it, Nature will succeed in transforming all this, but when one sees the time she has taken to do what she has done till now, if one wants to do all that in another way.... Evidently, for the divine Consciousness time means

very little, but for the consciousness here, it is very long." (CWM 5: 62)

5.

"On one side, the action of the forces of Yoga hastens the movement of transformation of the being in those parts that are ready to receive and respond to the power that is at work upon it. Yoga, in this way, saves time. The whole world is in a process of progressive transformation; if you take up the discipline of Yoga, you speed up in yourself this process. The work that would require years in the ordinary course, can be done by Yoga in a few days and even in a few hours. But it is your inner consciousness that obeys this accelerating impulse; for the higher parts of your being readily follow the swift and concentrated movement of Yoga and lend themselves more easily to the continuous adjustment and adaptation that it necessitates." (CWM 3: 86)

6.

"From time immemorial (some scholars say 8000 years before the Christian era) India has been the land of spiritual knowledge and practice, of the discovery of the Supreme Reality and union with it. It is the country that has practised concentration most and best. The methods, called Yoga in Sanskrit, that are taught and used in this country are countless. Some are merely material, others

purely intellectual, others religious and devotional; lastly, some of them combine these various processes in order to achieve a more integral result." (CWM 13: 373)

7.

"It is true that the conquest of the spirit supposes the execution in one life or a few lives of a process that in the ordinary course of Nature would involve a slow and uncertain procedure of centuries or even of millenniums: but this is a question of the speed with which the steps are traversed; a greater or concentrated speed does not eliminate the steps themselves or the necessity of their successive surmounting. The increased rapidity is possible only because the conscious participation of the inner being is there and the power of the Supernature is already at work in the half-transformed lower nature, so that the steps which would otherwise have had to be taken tentatively in the night of Inconscience or Ignorance can now be taken in an increasing light and power of Knowledge. The first obscure material movement of the evolutionary Force is marked by an aeonic graduality; the movement of life progress proceeds slowly but still with a quicker step, it is concentrated into the figure of millenniums; mind can still further compress the tardy leisureliness of Time and make long paces of the centuries; but when the conscious Spirit intervenes, a supremely concentrated pace of evolutionary swiftness becomes

possible. Still, an involved rapidity of the evolutionary course swallowing up the stages can only come in when the power of the conscious Spirit has prepared the field and the supramental Force has begun to use its direct influence. All Nature's transformations do indeed wear the appearance of a miracle, but it is a miracle with a method: her largest strides are taken over an assured ground, her swiftest leaps are from a base that gives security and certainty to the evolutionary saltus; a secret all-wisdom governs everything in her, even the steps and processes that seem to be most unaccountable." (CWSA 22: 966–967)

VI—Importance of Concentration in Spiritual Life

1.

"And from the spiritual point of view it [concentration] is still more important. There is *no* spiritual obstacle which can resist a penetrating power of concentration. For instance, the discovery of the psychic being, union with the inner Divine, opening to the higher spheres, *all* can be obtained by an intense and obstinate power of concentration—but one must learn how to do it." (CWM 9: 360–361)

2.

"In the beginning for a long time concentration is necessary even by effort because the nature, the consciousness are not ready. Even then the more quiet and natural the concentration, the better. But when the consciousness and nature are ready, then concentration must become spontaneous and easily possible without effort at all times. Even at last it becomes the natural and permanent condition of the being—it is then no longer concentration, but the settled poise of the soul in the Divine.

It is true that to be concentrated and do an outward action at the same time is not at first possible. But that too becomes possible. Either the consciousness divides into two parts, one the inner poised in the Divine, the other the

outer doing the outer work—or else the whole is so poised and the force does the work through the passive instrument." (CWSA 29: 298)

3.

"Then as to concentration. Ordinarily the consciousness is spread out everywhere, dispersed, running in this or that direction, after this subject and that object in multitude. When anything has to be done of a sustained nature, the first thing one does is to draw back all this dispersed consciousness and concentrate." (CWSA 29: 308)

4.

"There is within you a psychic being which is divine, directly a part of the Mother, pure of all these defects. It is covered and concealed by the ordinary consciousness and nature, but when it is unveiled and able to come forward and govern the being, then it changes the ordinary consciousness, throws all these undivine things out and changes the outer nature altogether. That is why we want the sadhaks to concentrate, to open this concealed consciousness—it is by concentration of whatever kind and the experiences it brings that one opens and becomes aware within and the new consciousness and nature begin to grow and come out. Of course we want them also to use their will and reject the desires and wrong movements of the vital, for by doing that the emergence of the true

consciousness becomes possible. But rejection alone cannot succeed; it is by rejection and by inner experience and growth that it is done." (CWSA 30: 24–25)

5.

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

6.

"To concentrate most on one's own spiritual growth and experience is the first necessity of the sadhak—to be too eager to help others draws away from the inner work. There is also likely to be an overzeal and haste which clouds the discrimination and makes what help is given less effective than it should be. To grow in the spirit is the greatest help one can give to others, for then something

flows out naturally to those around that helps them." (CWSA 31: 317) (CWSA 32: 324)

7.

"Now, if it so happens that you have decided to progress and if you enter the path of yoga, then a new factor intervenes. As soon as you want to progress, you immediately meet the resistance of everything that does not want to progress both in you and around you. And this resistance naturally expresses itself in all the thoughts that correspond to it.

… If you rise a step higher still and see the goal towards which you want to go, you will gradually come to discern between ideas favourable to your progress which you will keep, and ideas opposed to this progress which harm and impair it; and from above you will have the power to set them aside, calmly, without being otherwise affected by them. But if you remain there, at that level in the midst of that confusion and conflict, well, you risk getting a headache!

The best thing to do is to occupy yourself with something practical which will compel you to concentrate specially: studies, work or some physical occupation for the body which demands attention—anything at all that forces you to concentrate on what you are doing and no longer be a prey to these ramblings. But if you have the misfortune to remain there and look at them, then surely,

as I said, you will get a headache. For it is a problem which must be resolved either by a descent into practical life and a concentration on some practical effort or else by rising above and looking from above at all this chaos so as to be able to bring some order into it and set it right.

But one must never remain on the same plane, it is a plane which is no good either for physical or moral health." (CWM 8: 208–209)

8.

"One has to know about Overmind and Supermind but there should be no ambition to reach them—it should be regarded as a natural end of the sadhana which will come of itself. The concentration should be all on the immediate step—whatever is being done at the time. So have the working of the Power and let it work all out step by step." (CWSA 30: 406)

9.

"In the beginning of the sadhana you need nothing more than just what you say, 'concentration with faith, devotion and sincerity' on a form of the Divine Being—you can add prayer or the name, if you like." (CWSA 31: 63)

10.

"These ideas are wrong suggestions that you must throw away. There is no reason why you should be able to do

nothing in this life or all should be postponed to another. It is in this life that you have been called and are to reach the Divine. The Mother has not left you to yourself. But I think it is advisable that you should spend some time daily in concentration to keep the conscious connection and also write more often; if not every day, yet every second or third day." (CWSA 32: 302)

11.

"The basis of life here is wholly spiritual. An inner discipline is given, but it is on broad lines allowing each individual the necessary freedom for his nature and temperament to grow and change spontaneously. Broadly, the sadhana consists of a progressive surrender of oneself—inward and based upon it the outward also—to the Guru, to the Divine; meditation, concentration, work, service—all these are means for a self-gathering in all one's movements with the sole aim of delivering oneself into the hands of a Higher Power for being worked on and led towards the Goal." (CWSA 32: 332)

12.

"You should not indulge this sense of grief—remain calm, confident, turned to the one Will in all circumstances; that is the way to secure that each step will be taken in the right measure and produce its best possible consequences. Regard henceforth the question of *X* and your relation with *X* as a minor and subordinate thing on the outer side of

your sadhana. If you take it as a problem of the first importance it will become that and stand in your way again. Look at it as a question from the past that has been firmly settled and put in its place and turn to the central aim of your sadhana.

For the rest, apart from this circumstance, you need change nothing in the inward aim and concentration of your will and endeavour on the one thing to be done—the entire self-giving and self-dedication of your inner and outer being to the Divine alone. If you can adopt firmly the right inward attitude, it may even be easier than by an outward rule for your main guidance." (CWSA 31: 179–180)

13.

"In Yoga concentration is used also for another object,—to retire from the waking state, which is a limited and superficial condition of our consciousness, into the depths of our being measured by various states of Samadhi. For this process contemplation of the single object, idea or name is more powerful than the succession of concentrated thoughts. The latter, however, is capable, by bringing us into indirect but waking communion with the deeper states of being, of preparing an integral Samadhi. …

In the Yoga of Devotion, both processes are equally used to concentrate the whole being or to saturate the

whole nature with thoughts of the object of devotion, its forms, its essence, its attributes and the joys of adoration and union. Thought is then made the servant of Love, a preparer of Beatitude. In the Yoga of Knowledge meditation is similarly used for discrimination of the True from the apparent, the Self from its forms, and concentrated contemplation for communion and entry of the individual consciousness into the Brahman." (CWSA 13: 446)

14.

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

15.

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

16.

"You see, there are two very different lines; they can converge because everything can be made to converge; but as I said, there are two lines really very different. One is a perpetual choice, not only of what one reads but of what one does, of what one thinks, of all one's activities, of strictly doing only what can help you on the spiritual path; it does not necessarily have to be very narrow and limited, but it must be on a little higher plane than the

ordinary life, and with a concentration of will and aspiration which does not allow any wandering on the path, going here and there uselessly. This is austere; it is difficult to take up this when one is very young, because one feels that the instrument that he is has not been sufficiently formed or is not rich enough to be allowed to remain what it is without growing and progressing." (CWM 7: 308)

17.

"We must not be bewildered by appearances. Sri Aurobindo has not left us. Sri Aurobindo is here, as living and as present as ever and it is left to us to realise his work with all the sincerity, eagerness and concentration necessary." (CWM 13: 7)

18.

"*On the occasion of Sri Aurobindo's centenary, many people will come to the Ashram. What can we do to show them the reality of the Ashram?*

Live it. Live this reality. All the rest—talking, etc.—is of no use.

How to prepare ourselves for it?

By communion with the psychic being, the incarnate Divine, deep within us,

an intense aspiration,
a perfect concentration,
a constant dedication." (CWM 13: 148)

19.

"All Yoga proceeds in its method by three principles of practice; first, purification, that is to say, the removal of all aberrations, disorders, obstructions brought about by the mixed and irregular action of the energy of being in our physical, moral and mental system; secondly, concentration, that is to say, the bringing to its full intensity and the mastered and self-directed employment of that energy of being in us for a definite end; thirdly, liberation, that is to say, the release of our being from the narrow and painful knots of the individualised energy in a false and limited play, which at present are the law of our nature." (CWSA 24: 530)

20.

"The God-lover advances constantly towards this ultimate necessity of our birth in cosmos through a concentrated love and adoration by which he makes the supreme and universal Divine the whole object of his living—not either egoistic terrestrial satisfaction or the celestial worlds—and the whole object of his thought and his seeing. To see nothing but the Divine, to be at every moment in union with him, to love him in all creatures and have the delight

of him in all things is the whole condition of his spiritual existence. His God-vision does not divorce him from life, nor does he miss anything of the fullness of life; for God himself becomes the spontaneous bringer to him of every good and of all his inner and outer getting and having, *yoga-kṣemaṁ vahāmyaham.*" (CWSA 19: 331–332)

21.

"Therefore, it is the upward and inward orientation of the intelligent will that we must resolutely choose with a settled concentration and perseverance, *vyavasāya*; we must fix it firmly in the calm self-knowledge of the Purusha." (CWSA 19: 99)

VII—Power of Concentration and Attention

1.

"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." (CWM 12: 28–29)

2.

"I think no rule can be laid down applicable to all. There are some who have the expansive tendency of the vital, others who have the concentrative [tendency]. The latter are absorbed in their own intensity of endeavour and certainly they gather from that a great force for progress and are saved the expense and loss of energy which

frequently comes to the more communicative and also make themselves less open to reactions from others (though this cannot be altogether avoided). The others need to communicate what is in them and cannot wait for the full fullness before they use what they have. Even they may need to give out as well as to take in in order to progress. The only thing is that they must balance the two tendencies, concentrating to receive from above as much or more than they open sideways to distribute." (CWSA 31: 327)

3.

"There's a way of reducing the time necessary for doing things by increasing the concentration considerably. Some people can't do this for long, it tires them; but it's like weightlifting, isn't it, one can get accustomed to it. And then, if you can succeed in mastering this power of concentration and in making your mind absolutely still—for this indeed is the first condition—and if in this quietude you concentrate it, concentrate, concentrate, concentrate on the point you want to make, on the work you have to do or the action you have to perform, well, you can... it comes like a kind of extremely quiet but all-powerful force of propulsion, and you go forward with one movement... without hesitation you can literally do in a quarter of an hour what would otherwise take one hour. And so this has the great advantage that it gives you time and that after

this, instead of going from one activity to another, from one agitation to another, you can relax completely for some minutes and have a total rest. This gives you time to rest; and in this repose, naturally, as you are relaxed, all that could have been a little too tense is relaxed and put in order, and this puts you back in a condition in which you are once again able to make another concentration. Try!" (CWM 7: 126)

4.

"*Mother, one of the problems that arises in physical activities is that in order to be perfect at one game or one particular activity, one needs to concentrate only on that game or activity.*

That is quite wrong. ... It is altogether wrong. Indeed someone who has acquired control over himself and developed the power of concentration can apply this power of concentration to things that are apparently extremely different, even sometimes opposite, and he ought to be able to do them without one thing interfering with the other.

There is only the question of time to be considered, but this question may be resolved by two things: first by an enlightened and methodical organisation of one's life, then by doing away with the wastage of time which most people spend in useless activities—if these were to

disappear it would be a blessing for everyone—and first among them I put chattering, that is, speaking uselessly, among friends, colleagues... in all activities. The time one can waste in talking is tremendous! When one word would be enough, one says fifty. And that is not the only loss of time.... Actually, when one is short of time, it means one does not know how to organise one's life." (CWM 9: 83)

5.

"Probably no two ways are identical, everyone must find his own. But one must not be mistaken, it is not 'finding' by reasoning, it is 'finding' by aspiration; it is not by study and analysis, but by the intensity of the aspiration and the sincerity of the inner opening.

When one is truly and exclusively turned to the spiritual Truth, whatever name may be given to it, when all the rest becomes secondary, when that alone is imperative and inevitable, then, *one single moment* of intense, absolute, total concentration is enough to receive the answer." (CWM 9: 406)

6.

"Aspire, concentrate in the right spirit and, whatever the difficulties, you are sure to attain the aim you have put before you." (CWSA 29: 125)

VIII—Power of Exclusive Concentration

1.

"This power of exclusive concentration is not confined to absorption in a particular character or type of working of one's larger self, but extends to a complete self-forgetfulness in the particular action in which we happen at the moment to be engaged. The actor in moments of great intensity forgets that he is an actor and becomes the part that he is playing on the stage; not that he really thinks himself Rama or Ravana, but that he identifies himself for the time being with the form of character and action which the name represents and so completely as to forget the real man who is playing it. So the poet forgets himself, the man, the worker, in his work and is for the moment only the inspired impersonal energy which works itself out in formation of word and rhythm; of all else he is oblivious. The soldier forgets himself in the act and becomes the charge and the fury and the slaying. In the same way the man who is overcome by intense anger, forgets himself as it is commonly said, or as it has been still more aptly and forcibly put, becomes anger: and these terms express a real truth which is not the whole truth of the man's being at the time, but a practical fact of his conscious energy in action. He does forget himself, forgets all the rest of himself with its other impulses and powers of self-restraint and self-direction, so that he acts simply

as the energy of the passion which preoccupies him, becomes that energy for the time being. This is as far as self-forgetfulness can go in the normal active human psychology; for it must return soon to the wider self-aware consciousness of which this self-forgetfulness is only a temporary movement." (CWSA 22: 609)

2.

"There is a minor pragmatic use of exclusive concentration on the surface which may also give us an indication in spite of its temporary character. The superficial man living from moment to moment plays, as it were, several parts in his present life and, while he is busy with each part, he is capable of an exclusive concentration, an absorption in it, by which he forgets the rest of himself, puts it behind him for the moment, is to that extent self-oblivious. The man is for the moment the actor, the poet, the soldier or whatever else he may have been constituted and formed into by some peculiar and characteristic action of his force of being, his Tapas, his past conscious energy and by the action which develops from it." (CWSA 22: 607)

3.

"Not only is he apt to deliver himself up to this exclusive concentration in a part of himself for the time being, but his success in the action very largely depends on the completeness with which he can thus put aside the rest of

himself and live only in his immediate work. Yet all the time we can see that it is the whole man who is really doing the action and not merely this particular part of him; what he does, the way he does it, the elements he brings into it, the stamp he gives to his work depends on his whole character, mind, information, genius, all that the past of him has made him,—and not his past in this life only, but in other lives, and again not only his past, but the past, the present and the predestined future both of himself and the world around him are the determinants of his work. The present actor, poet or soldier in him is only a separative determination of his Tapas; it is his force of being organised for a particular kind of action of its energy, a separative movement of Tapas which is able—and this ability is not a weakness, a deficiency, but a great power of the consciousness—to absorb itself in that particular working to the temporary self-oblivion of the rest of itself, even though that rest is present all the time at the back of the consciousness and in the work itself and is active or has its influence in the shaping of the work. This active self-oblivion of the man in his work and the part he plays, differs from the other, the deeper self-oblivion, in that the wall of separation is less phenomenally and not at all enduringly complete; the mind can dissolve its concentration and go back from its work at any time to the consciousness of the larger self of which this was a partial action. The superficial or apparent man cannot so go back

at will to the real man within him; he can only do it to some extent abnormally or supernormally in exceptional conditions of his mentality or, more permanently and completely, as the fruit of a long and arduous self-training, self-deepening, self-heightening, self-expansion. Still he can go back; therefore the difference is phenomenal only, not essential: it is, in essence, in both cases the same movement of exclusive concentration, of absorption in a particular aspect of himself, action, movement of force, though with different circumstances and another manner of working." (CWSA 22: 607–608)

IX—How to Develop Concentration

1. **Concentration and will can be developed as well as muscles**
2. **Concentration grows by regular training and exercise**

"Concentration and will can be developed as well as muscles; they grow by regular training and exercise." (CWM 12: 137)

3. **To concentrate, one has to will for concentration**

i. So strengthen your will

"*Please give me some advice on how to concentrate and be ready to receive Your grace.*

Will for this concentration and strengthen your will." (CWM 17: 129)

4. **Concentration can be increased through regular, persevering, obstinate, unflagging exercise**

"*How to increase concentration (single-mindedness) and will-force—they are so necessary for doing anything.*

Through regular, persevering, obstinate, unflagging exercise—I mean exercise of concentration and will." (CWM 12: 398)

5. **Concentration can be developed exactly like the muscles; one may follow different systems and different methods of training**
6. **We do know that the most pitiful weakling, for example, can with discipline become as strong as anyone else**
7. **One should not have a will which flickers out like a candle**
8. **The will and concentration must be cultivated; it is a question of method ,and regular exercise**
9. **If you will, you can concentrate**

"Those who can attain perfect attention succeed in everything they undertake; they will always make a rapid progress. And this kind of concentration can be developed exactly like the muscles; one may follow different systems, different methods of training. Today we know that the most pitiful weakling, for example, can with discipline become as strong as anyone else. One should not have a will which flickers out like a candle.

The will, concentration must be cultivated; it is a question of method, of regular exercise. If you will, you can.

But the thought 'What's the use?' must not come in to weaken the will. The idea that one is born with a certain character and can do nothing about it is a stupidity." (CWM 4: 5)

10. To arrive at a settled divine status must be the object of our concentration

11. The first step in concentration must always be to accustom the discursive mind to a settled, unwavering pursuit of a single course of connected thought on a single subject

12. And this it must do undistracted by all lures and alien calls on its attention

13. Such concentration becomes difficult when we have to do it inwardly without any outward object or action on which to keep the mind

14. Yet this inward concentration is what the seeker of knowledge must effect

15. It is not a process of reasoning that is wanted so much as a dwelling on the fruitful essence of the idea which by the insistence of the soul's will upon it must yield up all the facets of its truth

16. Thus if it be the divine Love that is the subject of concentration, it is on the essence

of the idea of God as Love that the mind should concentrate in such a way that the various manifestations of the divine Love should arise luminously

17. Not only to the thought, but in the heart and being and vision of the sadhaka

18. The thought may come first and the experience afterwards, but equally the experience may come first and the knowledge arise out of the experience

19. Afterwards the thing attained has to be dwelt on and more and more held till it becomes a constant experience and finally the dharma or law of the being

"To arrive then at this settled divine status must be the object of our concentration. The first step in concentration must be always to accustom the discursive mind to a settled unwavering pursuit of a single course of connected thought on a single subject and this it must do undistracted by all lures and alien calls on its attention. Such concentration is common enough in our ordinary life, but it becomes more difficult when we have to do it inwardly without any outward object or action on which to keep the mind; yet this inward concentration is what the seeker of knowledge must effect. Nor must it be merely the consecutive thought of the intellectual thinker, whose only

object is to conceive and intellectually link together his conceptions. It is not, except perhaps at first, a process of reasoning that is wanted so much as a dwelling so far as possible on the fruitful essence of the idea which by the insistence of the soul's will upon it must yield up all the facets of its truth. Thus if it be the divine Love that is the subject of concentration, it is on the essence of the idea of God as Love that the mind should concentrate in such a way that the various manifestation of the divine Love should arise luminously, not only to the thought, but in the heart and being and vision of the sadhaka. The thought may come first and the experience afterwards, but equally the experience may come first and the knowledge arise out of the experience. Afterwards the thing attained has to be dwelt on and more and more held till it becomes a constant experience and finally the dharma or law of the being. (CWSA 23: 323)

20. So long as the body and the vital desires are active the mind is necessarily distracted

21. It is only when the body is forgotten and the vital part consents to quietude that a man can concentrate himself in thought

"Yet it is certain that it is only by the stilling of the lower that the higher gets full play. So long as the body and the vital desires are active the mind is necessarily distracted

and it is only when the body is forgotten and the vital part consents to quietude that a man can concentrate himself in thought and follow undisturbed the consecutive development whether of a train of reasoning or a train of inspiration." (CWSA 12: 23)

22. In life a man chooses his career and concentrates all his attention upon it, all his efforts to achieve as much perfection as he can in this line

23. This perfection comes usually by a building up of spontaneous reflex which is the result of constant repetition of the same movements

24. But this spontaneous reflex can be, with advantage, replaced by the faculty of concentrated attention

25. This faculty of concentration belongs not only to the intellectual but also to all activities and is obtained by the conscious control of the energies

26. It is well known that the value of a man is in proportion to his capacity of concentrated attention

27. The greater the concentration, the more exceptional is the result

28. A perfect and unfailing concentrated attention sets the stamp of genius on what is produced

29. As an athlete develops his muscles methodically through scientific and gradual training, the faculty of concentrated attention can be developed scientifically through methodical training in such a way that concentration is obtained at will and on whatever subject or activity is chosen

30. Thus the work of preparation is done consciously by a concentration of will and a gathered attention centred on one point or another according to plan and decision

31. The chief difficulty seems to be to obtain this power of concentration independent of all inner and outer circumstances

32. This power of concentration is perhaps difficult to obtain but not impossible for him who is determined and persevering

33. Moreover, whatever method of development is chosen, determination and perseverance are indispensable for obtaining success

34. The aim in the training is to develop this power of concentrating the attention at will on whatever subject or activity one chooses from

the most spiritual to the most material, without losing anything of the fullness of the power

35. For instance, in the physical field, transferring the use of the power from one game to another or one activity to another so as to succeed equally in all

36. This extreme attention concentrated on a game or a physical activity brings about in the body the thrill of an exhilarating joy

37. Yet by a proper training of concentrated attention one can obtain the phenomenon at will, on command, so to say, and the resulting perfection in the execution of any activity follows inevitably

"In sporting activities those who want to be successful choose a certain line or subject which appeals more to them and suits their nature; they concentrate on their choice and take great care not to disperse their energies in different directions. As in life a man chooses his career and concentrates all his attention upon it, so the sportsman chooses a special activity and concentrates all his efforts to achieve as much perfection as he can in this line. This perfection comes usually by a building up of spontaneous reflex which is the result of constant repetition of the same movements. But this spontaneous reflex can be, with

advantage, replaced by the faculty of concentrated attention. This faculty of concentration belongs not only to the intellectual but to all activities and is obtained by the conscious control of the energies.

It is well known that the value of a man is in proportion to his capacity of concentrated attention, the greater the concentration the more exceptional is the result, to the extent that a perfect and unfailing concentrated attention sets the stamp of genius on what is produced. There can be genius in sports as in any other human activity.

Shall we then advise a limit to one action in order to achieve perfection in concentration?

The advantages of limitation are well known, but it has also its inconvenience, bringing narrowness and incapacity for any other line than the one chosen. This is contrary to the ideal of a perfectly developed and harmonised human being. How to conciliate these two contrary tendencies?

There seems to be only one solution to the problem. In the same way as an athlete develops methodically his muscles by a scientific and gradual training, the faculty of concentrated attention can be developed scientifically by a methodical training—developed in such a way that concentration is obtained at will and on whatever subject or activity is chosen. Thus the work of preparation instead of being done in the subconscient by a slow and steady

repetition of the same movements, is done consciously by a concentration of will and a gathered attention centred on one point or another according to plan and decision. The chief difficulty seems to be to obtain this power of concentration independent from all inner and outer circumstances—difficult perhaps but not impossible for him who is determined and persevering. Moreover, whatever method of development is chosen, determination and perseverance are indispensable to obtain success.

The aim in the training is to develop this power of concentrating the attention at will on whatever subject or activity one chooses from the most spiritual to the most material, without losing anything of the fullness of the power,—for instance, in the physical field, transferring the use of the power from one game to another or one activity to another so as to succeed equally in all.

This extreme attention concentrated on a game or a physical activity like lifting, vaulting, punching, running, etc., focusing all energies on any of these movements which bring about in the body the thrill of an exhilarating joy is the thing which carries with it perfection in execution and success. Generally this happens when the sportsman is especially interested in a game or an activity and its happening escapes all control, decision or will.

Yet by a proper training of concentrated attention one can obtain the phenomenon at will, on command, so

to say, and the resulting perfection in the execution of any activity follows inevitably.

This is exactly what we want to try in our Department of Physical Education. By this process the result may come more slowly than by the usual method, but the lack of rapidity will surely be compensated by a fullness and richness in the expression." (CWM 12: 258–259)

38. Some are born with a great power of attention and concentration

39. There are others who don't have concentration

40. Those who do not have the power of concentration can increase it

41. One can develop concentration and there are no limits to the development

42. And it is altogether indispensable to develop concentration

"Some people can concentrate very quickly while others can't.

Perhaps they are born like that, for some reason or other, or perhaps they have practised it even without knowing that they were doing so. Yes, there are children who, even when very young, are very attentive, and others who are always distracted. But that is how the inner constitution of

different beings is. There are not two who are the same. Some are born with a great power of attention and there are others who don't have it.

Can it be increased?

One can develop it, one can, and there are no limits to the development. And it is even altogether indispensable to develop it." (CWM 6: 9)

43. It is easier to concentrate with your mind because we are accustomed to doing so

44. To find a solution to a problem, you try to concentrate and intensify your concentration at the point of the problem

45. You stop everything and wait until, by the intensity of the concentration, you obtain an answer

"From the mental point of view it is easier, for there you are accustomed to concentration. When you want to think and find a solution, instead of following the deductions of thought, you stop everything and try to concentrate and concentrate, intensify the point of the problem. You stop everything and wait until, by the intensity of the concentration, you obtain an answer. This also requires some time. But if you used to be a good student, you must

be quite used to doing that and it is not very difficult." (CWM 10: 133)

46. It is the Light or the Force which comes from beyond the mind that keeps the mind truly concentrated

47. Otherwise the mind is naturally restless, unfixed, constantly changing from one thing to another

"It is the Light or the Force which comes from beyond the mind that keeps the mind truly concentrated. Otherwise the mind is naturally restless, unfixed, constantly changing from one thing to another." (CWSA 31: 20)

48. One can for a time diminish outward contacts so as to concentrate

"To have no contact with people and shut oneself entirely is not healthy. But one can for a time diminish outward contacts so as to concentrate." (CWSA 31: 341)

49. To attain concentration you need a conscious control of the energies

50. First, you must become conscious of the receiving of energies, their passing into your being and their expenditure

51. Next, you must have a sort of higher instinct which tells you whence the most favourable energies come; then you put yourself in contact with them through thought, through stillness or any other process

52. You must know what energy you want, whence it comes, of what it is composed

"The control over the nerves should be such as would allow you a complete concentration on what you are doing and, through the very intensity of your concentration, you acquire an immediate response to external touches. To attain this concentration you need a conscious control of the energies. …

First, you must become conscious of the receiving of energies, their passing into your being and their expenditure. Next, you must have a sort of higher instinct which tells you whence the most favourable energies come; then you put yourself in contact with them through thought, through stillness or any other process—there are many. You must know what energy you want, whence it comes, of what it is composed." (CWM 4: 4)

53. Ninety per cent of men do not absorb enough energy or they take in too much and do not assimilate what they take

54. As soon as they have had a sufficient dose they immediately throw it out by becoming restless, talking, shouting

55. You must know how to keep within you the received energy and concentrate it fully on the desired activity and not on anything else

56. If you can do this, you won't need to use your will

57. You need only gather together all the energies received and use them consciously, concentrating with the maximum attention in order to do everything you want

58. And you must know how to give a real value to what you want to do or what the higher part of your being wants to do

"Ninety per cent of men do not absorb enough energy or they take in too much and do not assimilate what they take—as soon as they have had a sufficient dose they immediately throw it out by becoming restless, talking, shouting, etc. You must know how to keep within you the received energy and concentrate it fully on the desired activity and not on anything else. If you can do this, you won't need to use your will. You need only gather together all the energies received and use them consciously, concentrate with the maximum attention in order to do everything you want.

And you must know how to give a real value to what you *want* to do—what the higher part of your being wants to do— for to do what one *likes* to do is not difficult." (CWM 4: 5)

59. Sit down and try simply to concentrate on a point in order to intensify one's power of concentration

60. If you succeed in gathering your capacity for concentration sufficiently upon a point, whether mental, vital or physical, at a given moment you pass through and enter into another consciousness

"Others sit down and try to concentrate on something without following an idea—simply to concentrate on a point in order to intensify one's power of concentration; and this brings about what usually happens when you concentrate upon a point: if you succeed in gathering your capacity for concentration sufficiently upon a point whether mental, vital or physical, at a given moment you pass through and enter into another consciousness." (CWM 4: 104)

61. When the Mother gives you a written sentence which has the power to express a thought and tells you to concentrate on it

62. Then, through this thought-form, you can go back to the idea behind it, which can be expressed in many different thoughts

63. When she gives you a thought, it is simply to help you to concentrate

64. There are schools which put an object in front of you, a flower or a stone or any object, and then you sit around it and concentrate on it

65. And your eyes go squint until you become one with the object

66. That too is a method of concentration

"But when I give you a written sentence which has the power to express a thought and tell you to concentrate on it, then, through this thought-form you can go back to the idea behind, which can be expressed in many different thoughts. It is like a great hierarchy: there is a Principle right at the top, which itself is not the only one, for you can go still higher up; but this Principle can be expressed in ideas, and these ideas can be expressed in a great number of thoughts and this great number of thoughts can make use of many languages and an even greater number of words.

When I give you a thought it is simply to help you to concentrate.... There are schools which put an object in front of you, a flower or a stone, or any object, and then

you sit around it and concentrate on it and your eyes go like this (*Mother squints*) until you become the object. That too is a method of concentration. By gazing steadily like that, without moving, you finally pass into the thing you are gazing at. But you must not begin to gaze at all kinds of things: only gaze steadily at that. That gives you a look... it makes you squint.

All this is to learn concentration, that's all." (CWM 9: 383)

67. When you have a little time, whether it is one hour or a few minutes, tell yourself, 'At last, I have some time to concentrate, to collect myself, to relive the purpose of my life, to offer myself to the True and the Eternal'

68. If you took care to do this, you would find out that you were advancing very quickly on the path

69. Instead of wasting your time in chattering, in doing useless things, or in reading things that lower the consciousness

70. To make time that is already so short still shorter, only to realise at the end of your life that you have lost three-quarters of your chance

71. Then you want to put in double time, but that does not work

72. It is better never to lose an opportunity that is given to you, that is to say, to utilise for the true purpose the unoccupied moment before you

"When you have a little time, whether it is one hour or a few minutes, tell yourself, 'At last, I have some time to concentrate, to collect myself, to relive the purpose of my life, to offer myself to the True and the Eternal.' If you took care to do this each time you are not harassed by outer circumstances, you would find out that you were advancing very quickly on the path. Instead of wasting your time in chattering, in doing useless things, reading things that lower the consciousness—to choose only the best cases, I am not speaking of other imbecilities which are much more serious—instead of trying to make yourself giddy, to make time, that is already so short, still shorter only to realise at the end of your life that you have lost three-quarters of your chance—then you want to put in double time, but that does not work—it is better to be moderate, balanced, patient, quiet, but never to lose an opportunity that is given to you, that is to say, to utilise for the true purpose the unoccupied moment before you." (CWM 3: 250)

73. Instead of being occupied with oneself, one may be busy with someone else or with others or with some work or an interesting activity requiring concentration

74. The easiest way of forgetting oneself is to occupy oneself with something else

"What is the easiest way of forgetting oneself?'

Naturally that depends on each one; everyone has his special way of forgetting himself, which is the best for him. But obviously there is a fairly general method which may be applied in various forms: to occupy oneself with something else. Instead of being occupied with oneself, one may be busy with someone else or with others or some work or an interesting activity requiring concentration.

And it is still the same thing: instead of doubling up on oneself and brooding over oneself or coddling oneself as it were, like the most precious thing in the world, if one can unfold oneself and get busy with something else, something which is not quite one's own self, then that is the simplest and quickest way of forgetting oneself." (CWM 8: 287)

X—Spiritual Concentration in Ordinary Life

1.

"It is not absolutely necessary to abandon the ordinary life in order to seek after the Light or to practise Yoga. This is usually done by those who want to make a clean cut, to live a purely religious or exclusively inner and spiritual life, to renounce the world entirely and to depart from the cosmic existence by cessation of the human birth and a passing away into some higher state or into the transcendental Reality. Otherwise it is only necessary when the pressure of the inner urge becomes so great that the pursuit of the ordinary life is no longer compatible with the pursuit of the dominant spiritual objective. Till then what is necessary is a power to practise an inner isolation, to be able to retire within oneself and concentrate at any time on the necessary spiritual purpose. There must also be a power to deal with the ordinary outer life from a new inner attitude and one can then make the happenings of that life itself a means for the inner change of nature and the growth in spiritual experience." (CWSA 29: 17–18)

2.

"It is quite possible for you to do sadhana at home and in the midst of your work—many do so. What is necessary at the beginning is to remember the Mother as much as possible, to concentrate on her in the heart for a time every

day, if possible thinking of her as the Divine Mother, to aspire to feel her there within you, offer her your works and pray that from within she may guide and sustain you. This is a preliminary stage which often takes long, but if one goes through it with sincerity and steadfastness, the mentality begins little by little to change and a new consciousness opens in the sadhak which begins to be aware more and more of the Mother's presence within, of her working in the nature and in the life or of some other spiritual experience which opens the gate towards realisation." (CWSA 32: 186)

3.

"But our mind is obscure, partial in its notions, misled by opposite surface appearances, divided between various possibilities; it is led in three different directions to any of which it may give an exclusive preference. Our mind, in its search for what must be, turns towards a concentration on our own inner spiritual growth and perfection, on our own individual being and inner living; or it turns towards a concentration on an individual development of our surface nature, on the perfection of our thought and outer dynamic or practical action on the world, on some idealism of our personal relation with the world around us; or it turns rather towards a concentration on the outer world itself, on making it better, more suited to our ideas and temperament or to our conception of what should be. On

one side there is the call of our spiritual being which is our true self, a transcendent reality, a being of the Divine Being, not created by the world, able to live in itself, to rise out of world to transcendence; on the other side there is the demand of the world around us which is a cosmic form, a formulation of the Divine Being, a power of the Reality in disguise.” (CWSA 22: 1057)

XI—Concentration on the Divine

1.

"Concentration on the Divine is the only truly valid thing. To do what the Divine wants us to do is the only thing valid." (CWM 14: 8)

2.

"Concentration upon oneself means decay and death. Concentration on the Divine alone brings life and growth and realisation." (CWM 14: 15)

3.

"Always to maintain an attitude of concentration on the Divine." (CWM 17: 38)

4.

"In summary, austerity in feelings consists then of giving up all emotional attachment, of whatever nature, whether for a person, for the family, for the country or anything else, in order to concentrate on an exclusive attachment for the Divine Reality. This concentration will culminate in an integral identification and will be instrumental to the supramental realisation upon earth.

This leads us quite naturally to the four liberations which will be the concrete forms of this achievement. The liberation of the feelings will be at the same time the

liberation from suffering, in a total realisation of the supramental oneness." (CWM 12: 71)

5.

"Sir, is the Presence [*of the Divine*] of a physical nature or a spiritual fact? And is the physical sense accustomed or able to see or feel spiritual things—a spiritual Presence, a non-material Form? To see the Brahman everywhere is not possible unless you develop the inner vision—so to do that you have to concentrate. To see non-material forms is indeed possible for a few, because they have the gift by nature, but most can't do it without developing the subtle sight. It is absurd to expect the Divine to manifest his Presence without your taking any trouble to see it,—you have to concentrate." (CWSA 29: 299)

6.

"In a more deep and spiritual sense a concrete realisation is that which makes the thing realised more real, dynamic, intimately present to the consciousness than any physical thing can be. Such a realisation of the personal Divine or of the impersonal Brahman or of the Self does not usually come at the beginning of a sadhana or in the first years or for many years. It comes so to a very few; ... But to expect and demand it so soon and get fed up because it does not come and declare Yoga impossible except for two or three in the ages would betoken in the eyes of any experienced

Yogi or sadhaka a rather rash and abnormal impatience. Most would say that a slow development is the best one can hope for in the first years and only when the nature is ready and fully concentrated towards the Divine can the definitive experience come. To some rapid preparatory experiences can come at a comparatively early stage, but even they cannot escape the labour of the consciousness which will make these experiences culminate in the realisation that is enduring and complete. ... It is the fact that people who are grateful and cheerful and ready to go step by step, even by slow steps, if need be, do actually march faster and more surely than those who are impatient and in haste and at each step despair or murmur." (CWSA 29: 112)

7.

"There is no stage of the sadhana in which works are impossible, no passage in the path where there is no foothold and action has to be renounced as incompatible with concentration on the Divine. The foothold is there always; the foothold is the reliance on the Divine, the opening of the being, the will, the energies to the Divine, the surrender to the Divine. All work done in that spirit can be made a means for the sadhana." (CWSA 29: 216)

8.

"Selflessness, self-giving, entire faith and confidence, absence of demand and desire, surrender to the Divine

Will, love concentrated on the Divine—are some of the main signs [*of true love and bhakti*]." (CWSA 29: 356)

9.

"Why is it selfishness [*to be concentrated on the Divine*]? Selfishness is to live for oneself and not for something greater than the self. To be concentrated on the Divine at all times is to get out of the personal self and its aims into something greater and serve the aims of that greater Existence. It is no more selfishness than to live for others always would be selfishness." (CWSA 31: 238–239)

10.

"You know, the only way of knowing the Divine is by identifying oneself with Him. There is no other, there is only one, one single way. Hence, once you are master of this method of identification, you can identify yourself. So you choose your object for identification, you want to identify yourself with the Divine. … Ramakrishna used to say that the time could vary between three days, three hours and three minutes. Three days for very slow people, three hours for those who were a little swifter, three minutes for those who are used to it.

Three days for very slow people?

For very slow people, yes. He was asked: 'How long does it take one to get identified with the Divine?" that was his answer.

And that means three days without doing anything?

No, not without doing anything. It is not necessary to do nothing simply in order to be identified with the Divine. Evidently you cannot remain seated motionless for three days without doing anything; it would mean you had already attained an extraordinary degree of perfection if you could do that—forget all your needs and remain motionless for three days. No, it is not that he means; the thought must be concentrated solely on the Divine. And he did it before that person, to show him, prove to him that what he was saying was true. That did not take him more than three minutes.

But it is just that, what hinders the experience is the absence of the practice of concentration, and also the absence of one pointedness, singleness of purpose, of will. One 'wants' it for a minute, two minutes, ten minutes, a quarter of an hour, an hour, and afterwards, one wants many other things.... One 'thinks' about it for a few seconds, and after that thinks of a thousand other things. So naturally in this way you could take an eternity. For indeed, in this you cannot add up; if it could be accumulated like grains of sand, if with every thought you

give to the Divine you place a little grain of sand somewhere, after a time this would make a mountain. But it is not like that, it does not remain. It has no result. It does not accumulate, you cannot go on adding, cannot progress quantitatively—you can progress in intensity, progress qualitatively." (CWM 5: 223–224)

11.

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

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

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

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

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

The next thing you have to do is to tend it, to keep it always alert and awake and living. And for that what is required is concentration—concentration upon the Divine

with a view to an integral and absolute consecration to its Will and Purpose." (CWM 3: 1)

12.

"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)

13.

"But when we speak of the spiritual we are thinking of something that is concentrated in the Divine rather than in the external manifestation. The spiritual plane is something static behind and above the outward play; it supports the instruments of the nature, but is not itself included or involved in the external manifestation here." (CWM 3: 63–64)

14.

"There is where the parallel with the Ishta Devata which you suggest would not hold; for the Ishta Devata on whom the seeker concentrates is a *conscious* Personality of the Divine answering to the needs of his own personality and showing to him as in a representative image what the

Divine is or at least pointing him through itself to the Absolute." (CWSA 28: 371)

15.

"It [*to feel like doing namaskar to everyone*] is a feeling which some have who either want to cultivate humility (X used to do it, but I never saw that it got rid of his innate self-esteem) or who have or are trying to have the realisation of Narayan in all with a Vaishnava turn in it. To feel the One in all is right, but to bow down to the individual who lives still in his ego is good neither for him nor for the one who does it. Especially in this Yoga it tends to diffuse what should be concentrated and turned towards a higher realisation than that of the cosmic feeling which is only a step on the way." (CWSA 28: 429)

XII—Even in Activity Do Not Lose the Concentration on the Divine

1.

"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."

How I wish this would become true for everybody!
You may be engaged in the most active action, for example, in playing basketball, which needs a great deal of movement, and yet not lose the attitude of inner meditation and concentration upon the Divine. And when you get that, you will see that all you do changes its quality; not only will you do it better, but you will do it with an altogether unexpected strength, and at the same time keep your consciousness so high and so pure that nothing will be able to touch you any longer. And note that this can go so far that even if an accident occurs, it will not hurt you. Naturally, this is a peak, but it is a peak to which one can aspire." (CWM 4: 121)

2.

"Someone was seeking to establish a constant and conscious contact—absolutely constant and conscious—with the inner Godhead, not only with the psychic being

but the divine Presence in the psychic being, and she had decided that she would be like this, that she would busy herself with nothing else, that is to say, whatever she might be doing, her concentration was upon this, and even when she went out walking in the street, her concentration was upon this. She lived in a big city where there was much traffic: buses, tramways, etc., many things, and to cross the street one had to be considerably careful, wide-awake and attentive, otherwise one could get run over, but this person had resolved that she would not come out of her concentration. One day when she was crossing one of the big avenues with all its cars and its tramways, still deep in her concentration, in her inner seeking, she suddenly felt at about an arm's length a little shock, like this; she jumped back and a car passed just by her side. If she had not jumped back she would have been run over." (CWM 4: 268)

XIII—If We Concentrate on One Aspect of the Infinite We Will Miss the Boundless Totality of the Divine

1.

"If we concentrate only on one aspect and treat it as the whole, we illustrate the story of the blind men and the elephant; each of the blind inquirers touched a different part and concluded that the whole animal was some object resembling the part of which he had had the touch. An experience of some one aspect of the Infinite is valid in itself; but we cannot generalise from it that the Infinite is that alone, nor would it be safe to view the rest of the Infinite in the terms of that aspect and exclude all other view-points of spiritual experience. The Infinite is at once an essentiality, a boundless totality and a multitude; all these have to be known in order to know truly the Infinite. ... A whole knowledge must be there and the reason must become plastic enough to look at all sides, all aspects and seek through them for that in which they are one.

Thus too, if we see only the aspect of self, we may concentrate on its static silence and miss the dynamic truth of the Infinite; if we see only the Ishwara, we may seize the dynamic truth but miss the eternal status and the infinite silence, become aware of only dynamic being, dynamic consciousness, dynamic delight of being, but miss the pure existence, pure consciousness, pure bliss of being.

If we concentrate on Purusha-Prakriti alone, we may see only the dichotomy of Soul and Nature, Spirit and Matter, and miss their unity.” (CWSA 21: 345–346)

XIV—Concentration on the Divine in the Mental Domain

1.
"Mother, you said that if we think mentally of something we are immediately in the presence of that thing, but if, for example, we think mentally of something higher, of the Divine, for example...

Yes.

Are we immediately in His Presence?

Yes, but only that part of the thought, not your body. That's just what I said. In the mental domain it is like that; if one concentrates on the Divine and thinks of the Divine, the part... I don't say the whole thought, because thought is multiple and divided, but the part which is sincerely concentrated on the Divine is with Him. It does some good but not very much when this part is mixed with all the others which think of hundreds of different things at the same time, or when it goes down into the body, is all tied up precisely to that frightful slowness of material things, and when we have to take so many steps only to go from here to the door." (CWM 7: 217)

XV—Concentration on the Embodied Mother

1.
"Q: *When calling down the Force, should I concentrate on the embodied Mother or open to and concentrate on the consciousness of the Universal Mother?*

A: The embodied Mother must be the foundation of the concentration—even when you receive from the universal Consciousness above you, it is from her consciousness that you are receiving." (CWSA 32: 52)

2.
"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 opening of the psychic being, concentration on the Mother and self-offering to her are the direct way. The growth of Bhakti which you feel is the first sign of the psychic development. A sense of the Mother's presence or force or the remembrance of her supporting and strengthening you is the next sign. Eventually, the soul within begins to be active in aspiration and psychic perception guiding the mind to the right thoughts, the vital to the right movements and feelings, showing and rejecting all that has to be put away and turning the whole being in all its movements to the Divine alone." (CWSA 30: 321)

3.

"But its [true psychic consciousness] remaining seems to depend on the concentration on the Mother. When there is the concentration on the Mother, then the progress can be smooth and continuous; when there is a failure of the concentration, you come into the outward physical mind and at once there is a conflict between the growing quietude and the inner psychic fire and the physical consciousness. The quietude seeks to hold and control the physical consciousness and the fire to burn out the wrong activities and imperfections, but the consciousness finds the pressure hard to bear; it feels dull and troubled by the heat. For when the fire has won, all is cool; when it has to burn the resistances, then there is heat, it becomes a fire of tapasya. This seems to be the explanation of these alternating conditions. It is important therefore to keep the concentration and remain fixed in the Mother; nothing else for the time has any importance comparatively with that." (CWSA 30: 386)

4.

"The influence of the love for the Divine when it takes hold of any part is to turn it towards the Divine—as you describe it 'concentration on the Mother'—and in the end all is gathered and harmonised around this central turn of the being. The difficulty is with the mechanical parts of the being in which the old thoughts go on recurring by habit.

If the concentration continues to grow, this becomes a thing of little importance at the circumference of the mind and in the end drops away to be replaced by things that belong to the new consciousness." (CWSA 29: 341)

5.

"Mother, how can I open myself to you?

By quieting the mind and vital, by concentrating more on the Mother and by calling for her Force to enter and work in the being." (CWSA 32: 160)

6.

"You think too much of adverse forces. That kind of preoccupation causes much unnecessary struggle. Fix your mind on the positive side—open to the Mother's power, concentrate on her protection, call for light, calm and peace and purity and growth into the divine consciousness and knowledge." (CWSA 31: 760)

7.

"The other thing, the habit of concentrating on one thing and forgetting everything else, is a turn of the vital—it is a faculty that has a value because it can give great intensity to the nature and to any endeavour made by the nature. Only it has to be turned in the right direction and used by the mind and the psychic being for a whole-hearted

concentration and devotion to the Mother." (CWSA 31: 376)

8.

"The other experience was due to your mind dwelling in the state of the Mother's constant presence and its results. What you say is true, about these results, but it is not easy for the mind or vital or physical consciousness to get or keep the Mother's conscious presence—it is only the psychic that keeps it easily. So the thought brought down a pressure from above and a concentration within in the heart with a healing there and a pain of the yearning within followed by its sweetness. This pain is that of the psychic sorrow or perhaps rather of the psycho-vital sorrow and yearning—for the psychic sorrow itself is usually sweet and not painful." (CWSA 32: 289–290)

9.

"But a time will come when you will feel more and more that you are the instrument and not the worker. For first by the force of your devotion your contact with the Divine Mother will become so intimate that at all times you will have only to concentrate and to put everything into her hands to have her present guidance, her direct command or impulse, the sure indication of the thing to be done and the way to do it and the result. And afterwards you will realise that the divine Shakti not only inspires and guides,

but initiates and carries out your works; all your movements are originated by her, all your powers are hers, mind, life and body are conscious and joyful instrumentsof her action, means for her play, moulds for her manifestation in the physical universe.” (CWSA 32: 12–13)

XVI—Concentrating to Feel the Mother's Presence While Working

1.
"The spiritual effectivity of work of course depends on the inner attitude. What is important is the spirit of offering put into the work. If one can in addition remember the Mother in the work or through a certain concentration feel the Mother's presence or force sustaining or doing the work, that carries the spiritual effectivity still farther. But even if one cannot in moments of clouding, depression or struggle do these things, yet there can be behind a love or bhakti which was the original motive power of the work and that can remain behind the cloud and reemerge like the sun after dark periods." (CWSA 29: 242)

2.
"It is a little difficult at first to combine the inward condition with the attention to the outward work and mingling with others, but a time comes when it is possible for the inner being to be in full union with the Mother while the action comes out of that concentrated union and is consciously guided in all its details so that some part of the consciousness can attend to everything outside, even be concentrated upon it and yet feel the inward concentration in the Mother." (CWSA 29: 254)

3.

"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)

4.

"*During work, the consciousness, however high it was before, falls at once into inertia. Is this condition never to change?*

It is not necessary to fall into inertia, but one always comes into a less intensity of consciousness during work unless one has established in work the conscious contact with the Mother's Force and is aware of that during the work or unless one has developed a double consciousness, the inner concentrated, the outer doing the work." (CWSA 32: 244–245)

5.

"There should be not only a general attitude, but each work should be offered to the Mother so as to keep the attitude

a living one all the time. There should be at the time of work no meditation, for that would withdraw the attention from the work, but there should be the constant memory of the One to whom you offer it. This is only a first process; for when you can have constantly the feeling of a calm being within concentrated in the sense of the Divine Presence while the surface mind does the work, or when you can begin to feel always that it is the Mother's force that is doing the work and you are only a channel or an instrument, then in place of memory there will have begun the automatic constant realisation of Yoga, divine union, in works." (CWSA 32: 247)

6.

"… one can always do the work in a concentration in which the inner being is turned towards the Mother while the outer does the Mother's work." (CWSA 32: 418)

7.

"Work for the Mother done with the right concentration on her is as much a sadhana as meditation and inner experiences." (CWSA 32: 252)

XVII—Concentration of the Inner Consciousness

1.

"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. There are other possibilities besides those mentioned above, but these are perhaps the most common." (CWSA 29: 255)

2.

"The second is the inner consciousness always awake. At present that is difficult, because to keep the inner consciousness awake at all times can only come by a deepening of yourself so that the veil between the outer and inner which lifts only in concentration may cease to exist even when one is in the ordinary unconcentrated condition. It is for this deepening that the strong tendency to go inside comes upon you. Lastly, the Mother's force always there and receiving also a response at once from the physical consciousness." (CWSA 31: 386–387)

3.

"The method of Yoga in knowledge must always be a turning of the eye inward and, so far as it looks upon outer things, a penetrating of the surface appearances to get at the one eternal reality within them. The lower knowledge is preoccupied with the appearances and workings; it is the first necessity of the higher to get away from them to the Reality of which they are the appearances and the Being and Power of conscious existence of which they are the workings. It does this by three movements each necessary to each other, by each of which the others become complete,—purification, concentration, identification. ...

Concentration is necessary, first, to turn the whole will and mind from the discursive divagation natural to them, following a dispersed movement of the thoughts, running after many branching desires, led away in the track of the senses and the outward mental response to phenomena: we have to fix the will and the thought on the eternal and real behind all, and this demands an immense effort, a one-pointed concentration. Secondly, it is necessary in order to break down the veil which is erected by our ordinary mentality between ourselves and the truth; for outer knowledge can be picked up by the way, by ordinary attention and reception, but the inner, hidden and higher truth can only be seized by an absolute concentration of the mind on its object, an absolute concentration of the will to attain it and, once attained, to

hold it habitually and securely unite oneself with it. For identification is the condition of complete knowledge and possession; it is the intense result of a habitual purified reflecting of the reality and an entire concentration on it; and it is necessary in order to break down entirely that division and separation of ourselves from the divine being and the eternal reality which is the normal condition of our unregenerated ignorant mentality." (CWSA 23: 514–515)

4.

"To combine the two [*utsāha* for the work, and the pressure of quietude] is difficult, but a time comes when they do get reconciled—one remains poised in an inner concentration while the other is supported by it in its push towards work. The transformation of the nature, the harmonising of all these discordant things in the being are the work of sadhana." (CWSA 29: 259)

5.

"When one is concentrated within, the body can go on doing its work by the Force acting within it. Even the external consciousness can work separately under the motion of the Force while the rest of the consciousness is in concentration." (CWSA 29: 254)

6.

"It is good. Fasten on the true thing, the concentration in the inner being and the inner life. All these outer things are

of minor importance and it is only when the inner life is well established that the difficulties with which they are hampered can get their true solution. That you have seen several times when you went inside. To be too much occupied in mind with the outer difficulties keeps it externalised. Living inwardly you will find the Mother close to you and realise her will and her action." (CWSA 30: 226)

7.

"That sense of separate being and concentration behind the frontal consciousness is very good. It helps to liberate the inner being and make it stand back from the movements of the outer nature." (CWSA 30: 238)

8.

"In external things all men of action have to do that [*shift their concentration quickly from one thing to another*]—otherwise they would not be able to cope with their work. In respect to inner concentration, it is not so easy because people bring other vibrations which interfere with the poise of the consciousness—a mere mental interruption ought not to be difficult to recover from; but if the consciousness itself gets invaded or else drawn out, it takes time to get back. In the end a condition develops in which the inner consciousness is always concentrated and in a poise, samāhitaḥ , and outside things take place only on the outermost surface. Then it becomes easy." (CWSA 29: 312–313)

9.

"It is the physical mind that raises all these questions and cannot understand or give the right answer. The real knowledge and understanding can only come if you stop questioning with the small physical mind and allow a deeper and wider consciousness which is there within you to come out and grow. You would then get automatically the true answer and the true guidance. Your mistake is to attach so much importance to the external mind and its ideas and perceptions instead of concentrating on the growth of the inner consciousness." (CWSA 31: 52)

10.

"The only safe thing is to concentrate on the inner union foremost and altogether, to make that the one thing to be achieved and to leave aside all claims and demands for anything external, remaining satisfied with what the Mother gives and relying wholly on her wisdom and solicitude. It ought to be quite evident that a desire which raises revolt, doubt, depression, desperate struggles cannot be a true part of the spiritual movement. If your mind tells you that it is the right thing, then surely you must distrust the mind's suggestions. Concentrate entirely on the one thing needful and put away, if they come, all ideas and forces that want to disturb it or make you deviate." (CWSA 32: 484–485)

11.

"I did not receive any letter from you so recently as a fortnight or three weeks ago. If you feel in a pitiable condition, it is certainly not because you have incurred our displeasure. I have said that we are always with you and it is true, but to feel it you must draw back from your vital and be able to concentrate in your inner being. If you do that faithfully and sincerely, after a time you will feel the connection and the support.

The meaning of the phrase you speak of is this, that usually the vital tries to resist the call to change. That is what is meant by revolt or opposition. If the inner will insists and forbids revolt or opposition, the vital unwillingness may often take the form of depression and dejection, accompanied by a resistance in the physical mind which supports the repetition of old ideas, habits, movements or actions while the body consciousness suffers from an apprehension or fear of the called-for change, a drawing back from it or a dullness which does not receive the call." (CWSA 31: 207–208)

12.

"The inner connection can only be developed by an inner concentration and aspiration, not by a mere outward pranam every day. What most people do is simply to pull vital force from the Mother and live on it—but that is not the object of the Pranam." (CWSA 32: 565)

13.

"Mother, an inner effort is often spoilt by dispersions in outer activities.

When one is outwardly active, how to keep the concentration?... Oh, this should not be very difficult. Truly it should not be very difficult. For me what seems difficult is not to keep a kind of intensity of inner consciousness, to be separated from it; this seems something impossible. Once one catches that within oneself, how can one separate oneself from it, if you have had it once, if it has become a reality for you, this consciousness and this inner union with the psychic, and this consciousness and intensity of aspiration, and this flame which is always lit? Why, whatever one may be doing, this cannot be extinguished, it is always there." (CWM 7: 68)

14.

"Man carries within himself perfect power, perfect wisdom and perfect knowledge, and if he wants to possess them, he must discover them in the depth of his being, by introspection and concentration." (CWM 2: 69)

XVIII—In Yoga an Inward Concentration Has a Large Place

1.
"What you write about *X* is quite correct. It is not necessary to be always serious of face or silent in doing the Yoga, but it is necessary to take the Yoga seriously and silence and inward concentration have a large place. One can't be all the time throwing oneself outward if to go inside and meet the Divine there is one's aim. But that does not mean that one has to be grave and gloomy all the time or gloomy a big part of the time, and I don't suppose the sadhaks here are like that." (CWSA 31: 175)

2.
"When you get the touch, concentrate on opening to it; do not accept the opposite suggestions of the physical consciousness. The whole difficulty comes from your identifying yourself with your external, physical consciousness which is only a small outward part of your self. You have to learn to live in the rest of your being, more real, more inward which is open to the Truth; you will then feel your physical consciousness as something external which can be worked upon through the true consciousness and changed by the Force." (CWSA 31: 370)

XIX—Convert the Mental Seeking into a Living Spiritual Experience

1.

"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 ... one in the head." (CWSA 29: 6)

2.

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

aspiration and surrender that this self-opening can come." (CWSA 29: 20)

3.

"The way to realise is through a quiet mind and a vital free from desires. To reject the desires and demands of the vital and to quiet the excessive activity of the mind, so that a true consciousness and spiritual perception and knowledge may take the place of the mind's activity, are the requisite conditions of the Yoga.

The further method is,—(1) To concentrate in the heart and aspire and (2) to call to the divine Mother to enter there and purify the mind and vital and unveil the psychic being so that her constant guidance and presence in it may be felt always and (3) to concentrate in the quiet mind and (in the head) open oneself first to the divine force and light which is always above the mind and call to it to descend into the body and the whole being—either of these or both, according to the capacity of the sadhaka." (CWSA 29: 44–45)

4.

"If one concentrates in the head as many do it is a mental-spiritual meditation one seeks for, if in the heart it is a psychic meditation; these are the usual places where one concentrates." (CWSA 29: 306)

5.

"One can concentrate in any of the three centres which is easiest to the sadhak or gives most result. The power of the concentration in the heart-centre is to open that centre and by the power of aspiration, love, bhakti, surrender remove the veil which covers and conceals the soul and bring forward the soul or psychic being to govern the mind, life and body and turn and open them all—fully—to the Divine, removing all that is opposed to that turning and opening.

This is what is called in this Yoga the psychic transformation. 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 (mentalvital- 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. ...

The power of concentration in the eyebrows is to open the centre there, liberate the inner mind and vision and the inner or Yogic consciousness and its experiences and powers." (CWSA 29: 307)

6.

"It is then, if one looks closely, found to be concentrated in one place and on one occupation, subject or object—as when you are composing a poem or a botanist is studying

a flower. The place is usually somewhere in the brain, if it is the thought, in the heart if it is the feeling in which one is concentrated. The Yogic concentration is simply an extension and intensification of the same thing. It may be on an object as when one does tratak on a shining point—then one has to concentrate so that one sees only that point and has no other thought but that. It may be on an idea or a word or a name, the idea of the Divine, the word OM, the name Krishna, or a combination of idea and word or idea and name. But, farther, in Yoga one also concentrates in a particular place. There is the famous rule of concentrating between the eyebrows ... you concentrate in the head ... In the heart-centre one concentrates ...

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

One has not to fatigue oneself at first by long concentration if one is not accustomed, for then in a jaded mind it loses its power or value. One can 'relax' and meditate instead of concentrating. It is only as the concentration becomes normal that one can go on for a longer and longer time." (CWSA 29: 308–309)

7.

"Any method sincerely and persistently followed can end by bringing the opening. … Another method is concentration and aspiration in the heart which opens the inner emotional being. Another is the concentration in the head of which I spoke which opens the inner mind or opens the passage through the Brahmarandhra to the higher consciousness. These things are no fantastic invention of mine which one can dismiss as a new-fangled and untested absurdity; they are recognised methods which have succeeded in thousands of cases and here also there are plenty who have found their effect. But whatever method is used will not bring its effect at once; it must be done persistently, simply, directly till it succeeds." (CWSA 31: 729)

XX—Concentrate in the Heart to Become Aware of the Psychic Being

1.
"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. The concentration in the heart opens within and by following this inward opening and going deep one becomes aware of the soul or psychic being, the divine element in the individual. This being unveiled begins to come forward, to govern the nature, to turn it and all its movements towards the Truth, towards the Divine, and to call down into it all that is above. It brings the consciousness of the Presence, the dedication of the being to the Highest and invites the descent into our nature of a greater Force and Consciousness which is waiting above us. To concentrate in the heart centre with the offering of oneself to the Divine and the aspiration for this inward opening and for the Presence in the heart is the first way and, if it can be done, the natural beginning; for its result once obtained makes the spiritual path far more easy and safe than if one begins the other way." (CWSA 29: 6)

2.
"When we speak of concentrating in the heart in Yoga, we are speaking of the emotional centre and that like all the

others is in the middle of the body in a line corresponding to the spinal cord." (CWSA 30: 468)

3.
"Naturally, when I speak of the heart, I do not mean the physical organ, the viscera, but the psychological or psychic centre of the being." (CWM 4: 68)

4.
"The object of the concentration in the heart is to open the centre there (heart-lotus), to feel the presence of the Divine Mother in the heart and to become aware of one's soul or psychic being which is a portion of the Divine." (CWSA 29: 325)

5.
"The first opening is effected by a concentration in the heart, a call to the Divine to manifest within us and through the psychic to take up and lead the whole nature. Aspiration, prayer, bhakti, love, surrender are the main supports of this part of the sadhana— accompanied by a rejection of all that stands in the way of what we aspire for." (CWSA 30: 327–328)

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.

"Do not be always thinking of the vital movements and the ego—you have seen them and know that they are, it is enough. Concentrate rather in the heart on the opening there; concentrate persistently and aspire persistently and do not mind if it takes time. Call in any way, even if you cannot call yet deeply—then the deeper call will come." (CWSA 31: 236)

8.

"What you felt before was in your mental being and consciousness; after coming here you have evidently come out into your external and physical consciousness, that is why you feel as if all you had before was gone. It is only covered over by the obscurityof the physical consciousness and not gone.

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

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

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

(3) An aspiration for the Mother's presence in the heart and the control by her of mind, life and action.

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: 225–226)

9.

"The other way is concentration; you concentrate your consciousness in the heart ... and meditate on the Mother in the heart and call her in there." (CWSA 29: 106)

10.

"There is no method in this Yoga except to concentrate, preferably in the heart, and call the presence and power of

the Mother to take up the being and by the workings of her force transform the consciousness; ...” (CWSA 29: 107)

11.

“*Sweet Mother,*

How can one make one’s psychic personality grow?

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

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

In order to strengthen the contact and aid, if possible, the development of the conscious psychic personality, one should, while concentrating, turn towards it, aspire to know it and feel it, open oneself to receive its influence, and take great care, each time that one receives an indication from it, to follow it very scrupulously and sincerely. To live in a great aspiration, to take care to become inwardly calm and remain so always as far as

possible, to cultivate a perfect sincerity in all the activities of one's being—these are the essential conditions for the growth of the psychic being." (CWM 16: 221–222)

12.

"*In various times and places many methods have been prescribed for attaining this perception [of the psychic presence in us] and ultimately achieving this identification [with it]. Some methods are psychological, some religious, some even mechanical. In reality, everyone has to find the one which suits him best, and if one has an ardent and steadfast aspiration, a persistent and dynamic will, one is sure to meet, in one way or another—outwardly through reading and study, inwardly through concentration, meditation, revelation and experience—the help one needs to reach the goal."*

What is the difference between mechanical, religious and psychological methods? Religious methods are those adopted by the various religions. Not many religions speak of the inner Truth; for them, it is more a matter of coming into contact with their God. Heaven and hell: this is a roundabout way of saying...

Psychological methods are those that deal with states of consciousness, that try to realise the inner self by withdrawing from all activity and attempting to create the conscious inner conditions of detachment, self-abstraction,

concentration, higher Reality, renunciation of all the outer movements, etc. A psychological method is one which acts on the thoughts, feelings and actions.

Mechanical methods are those which are based on purely mechanical means—one can benefit from them by using them in a certain way. Take breath-control, for example: it acts more or less mechanically, but it is sometimes recommended to add to this a concentration of one's thought, to repeat a word, as in Vivekananda's teaching. This works up to a certain point, but then it fades away. These human attempts in various times and places have been more or less successful individually but they have never given a collective result." (CWM 15: 303–304)

13.

"The latter [identification with the psychic being] can be made more and more lasting and, in certain cases, it becomes permanent and never leaves the person who has realised it, whatever his outer activities may be. In other words, the identification is no longer realised only in meditation and concentration, but its effects are felt at every moment of one's life, in sleep as well as in waking." (CWM 12: 36–37)

14.

"The heart in this Yoga should in fact be the main centre of concentration until the consciousness rises above." (CWSA 29: 350)

15.

"Aspire for your will to be one with the Divine will, concentrate in the heart and be plastic to whatever experience comes, neither forcing nor resisting any spiritual experience." (CWSA 29: 57)

16.

"Concentration in the heart is not meditation, it is a call on the Divine, on the Beloved." (CWSA 29: 226)

17.

"In the heart-centre one concentrates in an aspiration, for an opening, for the presence or living image of the Divine there or whatever else is the object. There may be japa of a name but, if so, there must also be a concentration on it and the name must repeat itself there in the heart-centre." (CWSA 29: 308–309)

18.

"The concentration in the heart is what brings about the opening of the psychic which is your principal need. If the concentration has brought about a feeling which makes

you judge clearly all the other movements and see their nature, then the psychic is already in action. For this is the psychic feeling which brings with it a clear insight into the nature of all movements that come and makes it easy to reject what has to be rejected and keep the right attitude and perception. It does not matter about the image of the Mother. It is her presence whether in form or not that has to be felt always and this the psychic opening will surely bring." (CWSA 29: 310)

19.

"*Mother, why is it better to concentrate in the heart?*

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

20.

"By concentration on the heart centre that can open first liberating the psychic action, which is veiled by the emotional, into free play. In many there is first some opening of the vital centre and for a long time there is an abundant but unpurified play of experiences on the vital plane. In the Tantric discipline there is a process of opening all the centres from the Muladhara upward. In our Yoga very often the Power descends from above and opens the Ajnachakra first, then the others in order. But it is perhaps the safest to open by concentration the heart-lotus first so as to have the psychic influence from the beginning." (CWSA 30: 351)

21.

"As I have said, the response of the physical mind or vital to these forces is a habit. You get upset as soon as they touch either and lose control over yourself. The concentration in the heart is the way to get rid of them, but there must also be a detachment of the consciousness so that it can stand back from the attack and feel separate from it." (CWSA 31: 404)

22.

"For this penetration into the luminous crypt of the soul one has to get through all the intervening vital stuff to the psychic centre within us, however long, tedious or difficult

may be the process. The method of detachment from the insistence of all mental and vital and physical claims and calls and impulsions, a concentration in the heart, austerity, self-purification and rejection of the old mind movements and life movements, rejection of the ego of desire, rejection of false needs and false habits, are all useful aids to this difficult passage: but the strongest, most central way is to found all such or other methods on a self-offering and surrender of ourselves and of our parts of nature to the Divine Being, the Ishwara." (CWSA 22: 940)

23.

"... through a sustained effort, a deep concentration, a great forgetfulness of self, you succeed in coming into touch with your psychic being, …" (CWM 4: 245)

XXI—Concentration in the Head and Above the Head

1.

"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. To concentrate in the head with the aspiration for quietude in the mind and the realisation of the Self and Divine above is the second way of concentration. 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. For some the mental

concentration is easier, for some the concentration in the heart centre; some are capable of doing both alternately—but to begin with the heart centre, if one can do it, is the more desirable." (CWSA 29: 7)

2.

"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. If one begins with this movement, then the Power from above has in its descent to open all the centres (including the lowest centre) and to bring out the psychic being; for until that is done there is likely to be much difficulty and struggle of the lower consciousness obstructing, mixing with or even refusing the Divine Action from above. If the psychic being is once active this struggle and these difficulties can be greatly minimised." (CWSA 29: 307) (CWSA 30: 415)

3.

"The object of the concentration in the head is to rise to the Divine Consciousness and bring down the Light of the

Mother or her Force or Ananda into all the centres." (CWSA 29: 325)

4.

"Instead of concentrating on an object, you concentrate in the head in a will, a call for the descent of the peace from above or, as some do, an opening of the unseen lid and an ascent of the consciousness above." (CWSA 29: 308)

5.

"... opening 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. With others there is either the descent, first into the head, then down to the heart level, then to the navel and below and through the whole body, or else an inexplicable opening—without any sense of descent— of peace, light, wideness or power or else a horizontal opening into the cosmic consciousness or, in a suddenly widened mind, an outburst of knowledge.

Whatever comes has to be welcomed—for there is no absolute rule for all,—but if the peace has not come first, care must be taken not to swell oneself in exultation or lose the balance. The capital movement however is when the Divine Force or Shakti, the power of the Mother comes down and takes hold, for then the organisation of the consciousness begins and the larger foundation of the Yoga." (CWSA 30: 328)

6.

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

…

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

7.

"But our thought is something which hardly exists. It can be 'our' thought only if, instead of being like a public place as we generally are in our normal state—we are like a public place and all the forces pass there, come and go, enter, depart, jostle each other and even quarrel—if

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

XXII—Without the Psychic Preparation the Concentration in the Head Is Not Safe

1.

"One has to open through concentration in the heart centre or above the head, in the former case to the psychic, in the latter to the higher Truth. But without the psychic preparation or at least a thorough purification of the being, the latter course is not safe." (CWSA 29: 310)

2.

"At any rate he may try the effects of an active concentration in either the head (forehead centre) or heart. The latter may be safer so as to avoid the return of the heating of the head which came from that first concentration. If there are any disturbing results, the concentration should not be continued and all should be turned towards a purification of the being such as he speaks of having practised and only when this is sufficiently advanced, should the concentration be resumed." (CWSA 29: 317)

3.

"It may be better to concentrate in the heart rather than in the mind, offer yourself from there and call the Mother into the heart leaving the thoughts to fall silent of themselves. Otherwise with the present method you have

simply to persevere till the present brief and imperfect stillings of the mind become longer and deeper." (CWSA 29: 310)

4.

"Concentration in the heart is best aided if possible by the power and light descending from above the head." (CWSA 29: 311)

XXIII—If One Has Already Started Concentrating Successfully on a Higher Centre, Then One Should Not Discontinue

1.

"It [*concentration in the heart*] is the best to 'start with'—but as you have already started with success on the two higher centres, there is no reason why you should discontinue that. The other you may try from time to time when you find a sufficient quietude. Concentration there leads—or should lead—to the psychic opening." (CWSA 29: 310–311)

2.

"Sweet Mother, here it is written: 'The heart in this Yoga should in fact be the main centre of concentration until the consciousness rises above.' But each one's consciousness is on a different plane!

Yes, very different. Only it is always said: 'Concentrate here, on the solar plexus, the centre, here, because it's here that one can most easily find the psychic, enter into contact with the psychic. That's why. That's what it means.

Once the consciousness rises where does one find it?

Above the head, above the mind. What Sri Aurobindo means is: Unless one has gone beyond the mind and into altogether higher regions, so long as one remains in the human consciousness, the mental, vital, physical consciousness, one must concentrate in order to find the psychic. It is only if you have soared up out of the human consciousness and entered consciously the higher regions above the mind, far above the mind, that you no longer need to concentrate in the psychic because you will naturally find it." (CWM 7: 248)

3.

"If the concentration takes place naturally in the head you must allow it to do so, but the possibility of this has been prepared by the previous concentration in the heart, so that also need not be discontinued unless the force working in you insists on the upper concentration only. Aspiration can be continued in the same way until the conduct of the sadhana by the Mother's power is clearly felt and becomes to you the normal thing." (CWSA 30: 456)

XXIV—What 'Concentrate the Consciousness' Means

1.

"Sweet Mother, when you say, 'Concentrate in the heart' does it mean concentrate with the mind?

The consciousness, not the mind, the consciousness!

I don't say think in the heart, I say concentrate, concentrate the energy, concentrate the consciousness, concentrate the aspiration, concentrate the will. *Concentrate.* One can have an extremely intense concentration without a single thought, and in fact it is usually much more intense when one doesn't think. (*Silence*) It's one of the most indispensable things to do if one wants to succeed in having self-control and even a limited self-knowledge: to be able to localise one's consciousness and move it about in the different parts of one's being, in such away as to distinguish between one's consciousness and one's thought, feelings, impulses, become aware of what the consciousness is in itself." (CWM 7: 249–250)

2.

"You can concentrate the consciousness anywhere in any centre. You have only to think of yourself as centrally there and try to fix and keep that. A strain or any effort to do so is not necessary but a quiet and steady dwelling in the idea.

Most people associate consciousness with the brain or mind because that is the centre for intellectual thought and mental vision, but consciousness is not limited to that kind of thought or vision. It is everywhere in the system and there are several centres of it, e.g., the centre for inner concentration is not in the brain but in the heart,—the originating centre of vital desire is still lower down.” (CWSA 29: 309–310)

3.

“There is no harm in concentrating sometimes in the heart and sometimes above the head. But concentration in either place does not mean keeping the attention fixed on a particular spot; you have to take your station of consciousness in either place and concentrate there not on the place, but on the Divine. This can be done with eyes shut or with eyes open, according as it best suits you.

You can concentrate on the sun, but to concentrate on the Divine is better than to concentrate on the sun.” (CWSA 29: 309)

4.

“Just as one can concentrate the thought on an object or the vision on a point, so one can concentrate will on a particular part or point of the body and give an order to the consciousness there. That order reaches the subconscient.” (CWSA 31: 609–610)

XXV—Why Concentrate the Consciousness in the Heart or Mind to Go Within or Go Above

1.

"It all depends upon where the consciousness places itself and centralises itself. If the consciousness places or associates itself within the ego, you are identified with the ego—if in the mind, it is identified with the mind and its activities and so on. If the consciousness puts its stress outside, it is said to live in the external being and becomes oblivious of its inner mind and vital and inmost psychic; if it goes inside, puts its centralising stress there, then it knows itself as the inner being or, still deeper, as the psychic being; if it ascends out of the body to the planes where self is naturally conscious of its wideness and freedom, it knows itself as the self and not the mind, life or body. It is this stress of consciousness that makes all the difference. That is why one has to concentrate the consciousness in heart or mind in order to go within or go above. It is the disposition of the consciousness that determines everything, makes one predominantly mental, vital, physical or psychic, bound or free, separate in the Purusha or involved in the Prakriti." (CWSA 28: 20–21)

2.

"Consciousness is a fundamental thing, it is the fundamental thing in existence—it is the energy, the

action, the movement of consciousness that creates the universe and all that is in it—not only the macrocosm, but the microcosm is nothing but consciousness arranging itself. ... When it wants to liberate itself, slowly, evolutionarily, out of matter, but still in the form, it emerges as life, as the animal, as man and it can go on evolving itself still farther out of its involution and become something more than mere man. If you can grasp that, then it ought not to be difficult to see farther that it can subjectively formulate itself as a physical, a vital, a mental, a psychic consciousness—all these are present in man, but as they are all mixed up together in our external being and their real status is hidden behind in our inner secret nature one can only become fully aware of them by releasing the original limiting stress of the consciousness which makes us live in our external selves and becoming awake and centred within in the inner being. As the consciousness in us, by its external concentration or stress, has put all these things behind—behind a wall or veil—it has to break down the wall or veil and get back in its stress into these inner parts of existence—that is what we call living within; then our external being seems to us something small and superficial, we are or can become aware of the large and rich and inexhaustible kingdoms within. So also consciousness in us has drawn a lid or covering or whatever one likes to call it between the lower planes of mind, life, body supported by the psychic and the higher

planes which contain the spiritual kingdoms where the self is always free and limitless,— and it can break or open the lid or covering and ascend there and become the Self free and wide and luminous or else bring down the influence, reflection, finally even the presence and power of the higher consciousness into the lower nature." (CWSA 28: 22–23)

3.

"The more important of the experiences you enumerate are those below.

…

(3) The effect of the meditation in the heart extending itself to the head and creating movements there is normal—in whatever centre the concentration takes place the Yoga force generated extends to the others and produces concentration or workings there." (CWSA 30: 466–467)

XXVI—To Concentrate in the Heart and at the Crown of the Head Gives a More Complete Power of Sadhana

1.

"It is evident that your sadhana has been up till now in the mind—that was why you found it easy to concentrate at the crown of the head because the centre there directly commands the whole mental range. The mind quieted and experiencing the effects of the sadhana quieted the vital disturbance, but did not clear and change the vital nature.

Now the sadhana seems to be descending into the vital to clear and change it. The first result is that the difficulty of the vital has shown itself—the ugly images and alarming dreams come from a hostile vital plane which is opposed to the sadhana. From there also comes the renewal of the agitation, the disinclination and resistance to the sadhana. This is not a going back to the old condition, but the result of a pressure of the Yoga-Force on the vital for change to which there is a resistance.

It is this descent of the sadhana to free the vital being that made you feel the necessity of concentrating in the region of the heart; for in the region of the heart is the psychic centre and below, behind the navel, is the vital centre. If these two can be awakened and occupied by the Yoga-Force, then the psychic or Soul-Power will command the whole vital range and purify the vital nature and

tranquillise it and turn it towards the Divine. It will be best if you are able to concentrate at will in the heart region and at the crown of the head, for that gives a more complete power of sadhana." (CWSA 31: 123)

2.

"That is the fundamental rationale of the sadhana. It will be evident that the two most important things here are the opening of the heart centre and the opening of the mind centres to all that is behind and above them. For the heart opens to the psychic being and the mind centres open to the higher consciousness and the nexus between the psychic being and the higher consciousness is the principal means of the siddhi. (CWSA 30: 327)

3.

"The concentration in the heart which is intended to bring out the psychic being and the calling down of the descent from above are two sides of the same thing and are complementary and can go naturally together." (CWSA 30: 386)

4.

"Certainly the concentration in the heart is very necessary for the full transformation. When peace is established in the heart, it is possible for the psychic being to come forward and rule the mind, life and body. The descent from

above prepares the being, but unless the psychic acts fully it cannot change by itself the outer being, though one can have a settled inner peace, freedom, light, not disturbed by the outer movements, but the outer movements will remain. It is only the combined action of the psychic and the spiritual power that can change it." (CWSA 30: 386–387)

5.

"If the attacks of the hostile forces have been made less strong by concentrating in the heart (or if they have become less frequent) then you must continue that concentration until you are able to join the head and the heart, the psychic and the higher consciousness. It all depends on that. The psychic must be strong enough to compel the vital and physical to give themselves to the Divine—or the higher consciousness must so descend and occupy everything that the old movements can only at most move on the surface without being able to enter in or touch the inner calm—or the two together, psychic and higher consciousness, must occupy the whole being. These are the three ways in which the Yoga moves. If the concentration in the heart, which means the awakening of the psychic, is most effective against the attacks, then it is that you must follow." (CWSA 31: 795–796)

6.

"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)

7.

"The concentration is all right—since it is proceeding so well, the concentration in the higher centres should continue, but as the consciousness comes down or to help its coming down to the vital centres, more concentration in the heart may be necessary hereafter." (CWSA 30: 488)

XXVII—Concentration on Higher Mentality and Deeper Soul Are the Two Hooks by which the Divine Can Lay Hold

1.

"Concentration is indeed the first condition of any Yoga, but it is an all-receiving concentration that is the very nature of the integral Yoga. A separate strong fixing of the thought, of the emotions or of the will on a single idea, object, state, inner movement or principle is no doubt a frequent need here also; but this is only a subsidiary helpful process. A wide massive opening, a harmonised concentration of the whole being in all its parts and through all its powers upon the One who is the All is the larger action of this Yoga without which it cannot achieve its purpose. For it is the consciousness that rests in the One and that acts in the All to which we aspire; it is this that we seek to impose on every element of our being and on every movement of our nature. This wide and concentrated totality is the essential character of the Sadhana and its character must determine its practice.

But even though the concentration of all the being on the Divine is the character of the Yoga, yet is our being too complex a thing to be taken up easily and at once, as if we were taking up the world in a pair of hands, and set in its entirety to a single task. Man in his effort at self-transcendence has usually to seize on some one spring or

some powerful leverage in the complicated machine that his nature is; this spring or lever he touches in preference to others and uses it to set the machine in motion towards the end that he has in view. In his choice it is always Nature itself that should be his guide. But here it must be Nature at her highest and widest in him, not at her lowest or in some limiting movement. In her lower vital activities it is desire that Nature takes as her most powerful leverage; but the distinct character of man is that he is a mental being, not a merely vital creature. As he can use his thinking mind and will to restrain and correct his life impulses, so too he can bring in the action of a still higher luminous mentality aided by the deeper soul in him, the psychic being, and supersede by these greater and purer motive-powers the domination of the vital and sensational force that we call desire. He can entirely master or persuade it and offer it up for transformation to its divine Master. This higher mentality and this deeper soul, the psychic element in man, are the two grappling hooks by which the Divine can lay hold upon his nature." (CWSA 23: 78–79)

2.

"It is, then, in the highest mind of thought and light and will or it is in the inner heart of deepest feeling and emotion that we must first centre our consciousness,—in either of them or, if we are capable, in both together,—and use that

as our leverage to lift the nature wholly towards the Divine. The concentration of an enlightened thought, will and heart turned in unison towards one vast goal of our knowledge, one luminous and infinite source of our action, one imperishable object of our emotion is the starting-point of the Yoga. And the object of our seeking must be the very fount of the Light which is growing in us, the very origin of the Force which we are calling to move our members. Our one objective must be the Divine himself to whom, knowingly or unknowingly, something always aspires in our secret nature. There must be a large,many-sided yet single concentration of the thought on the idea, the perception, the vision, the awakening touch, the soul's realisation of the one Divine. There must be a flaming concentration of the heart on the seeking of the All and Eternal and, when once we have found him, a deep plunging and immersion in the possession and ecstasy of the All-Beautiful. There must be a strong and immovable concentration of the will on the attainment and fulfilment of all that the Divine is and a free and plastic opening of it to all that he intends to manifest in us. This is the triple way of the Yoga." (CWSA 23: 80–81)

3.

"But on that which as yet we know not how shall we concentrate? And yet we cannot know the Divine unless we have achieved this concentration of our being upon

him. A concentration which culminates in a living realisation and the constant sense of the presence of the One in ourselves and in all of which we are aware, is what we mean in Yoga by knowledge and the effort after knowledge. It is not enough to devote ourselves by the reading of Scriptures or by the stress of philosophic reasoning to an intellectual understanding of the Divine; for at the end of our long mental labour we might know all that has been said of the Eternal, possess all that can be thought about the Infinite and yet we might not know him at all. This intellectual preparation can indeed be the first stage in a powerful Yoga, but it is not indispensable: it is not a step which all need or can be called upon to take. Yoga would be impossible, except for a very few, if the intellectual figure of knowledge arrived at by the speculative or meditative Reason were its indispensable condition or a binding preliminary. All that the Light from above asks of us that it may begin its work is a call from the soul and a sufficient point of support in the mind. This support can be reached through an insistent idea of the Divine in the thought, a corresponding will in the dynamic parts, an aspiration, a faith, a need in the heart. Any one of these may lead or predominate, if all cannot move in unison or in an equal rhythm. The idea may be and must in the beginning be inadequate; the aspiration may be narrow and imperfect, the faith poorly illumined or even, as not surely founded on the rock of knowledge,

fluctuating, uncertain, easily diminished; often even it may be extinguished and need to be lit again with difficulty like a torch in a windy pass. But if once there is a resolute self-consecration from deep within, if there is an awakening to the soul's call, these inadequate things can be a sufficient instrument for the divine purpose. Therefore the wise have always been unwilling to limit man's avenues towards God; they would not shut against his entry even the narrowest portal, the lowest and darkest postern, the humblest wicket-gate. Any name, any form, any symbol, any offering has been held to be sufficient if there is the consecration along with it; for the Divine knows himself in the heart of the seeker and accepts the sacrifice." (CWSA 23: 81–82)

4.

"When once the object of concentration has possessed and is possessed by the three master instruments, the thought, the heart and the will,—a consummation fully possible only when the desire-soul in us has submitted to the Divine Law,—the perfection of mind and life and body can be effectively fulfilled in our transmuted nature. This will be done, not for the personal satisfaction of the ego, but that the whole may constitute a fit temple for the Divine Presence, a faultless instrument for the divine work. For that work can be truly performed only when the instrument, consecrated and perfected, has grown fit for a selfless action,—and that will be when personal desire and

egoism are abolished, but not the liberated individual. Even when the little ego has been abolished, the true spiritual Person can still remain and God's will and work and delight in him and the spiritual use of his perfection and fulfilment. Our works will then be divine and done divinely; our mind and life and will, devoted to the Divine, will be used to help fulfil in others and in the world that which has been first realised in ourselves,— all that we can manifest of the embodied Unity, Love, Freedom, Strength, Power, Splendour, immortal Joy which is the goal of the Spirit's terrestrial adventure." (CWSA 23: 84–85)

5.

"The Yoga must start with an effort or at least a settled turn towards this total concentration. A constant and unfailing will of consecration of all ourselves to the Supreme is demanded of us, an offering of our whole being and our many-chambered nature to the Eternal who is the All. The effective fullness of our concentration on the one thing needful to the exclusion of all else will be the measure of our self-consecration to the One who is alone desirable. But this exclusiveness will in the end exclude nothing except the falsehood of our way of seeing the world and our will's ignorance. For our concentration on the Eternal will be consummated by the mind when we see constantly the Divine in itself and the Divine in ourselves, but also the Divine in all things and beings and happenings. It will be

consummated by the heart when all emotion is summed up in the love of the Divine,—of the Divine in itself and for itself, but love too of the Divine in all its beings and powers and personalities and forms in the Universe. It will be consummated by the will when we feel and receive always the divine impulsion and accept that alone as our sole motive force; but this will mean that, having slain to the last rebellious straggler the wandering impulses of the egoistic nature, we have universalised ourselves and can accept with a constant happy acceptance the one divine working in all things. This is the first fundamental siddhi of the integral Yoga." (CWSA 23: 85)

6.

"In the first movement of self-preparation, the period of personal effort, the method we have to use is this concentration of the whole being on the Divine that it seeks and, as its corollary, this constant rejection, throwing out, *katharsis*, of all that is not the true Truth of the Divine. An entire consecration of all that we are, think, feel and do will be the result of this persistence. This consecration in its turn must culminate in an integral self-giving to the Highest; for its crown and sign of completion is the whole nature's all-comprehending absolute surrender. In the second stage of the Yoga, transitional between the human and the divine working, there will supervene an increasing purified and vigilant passivity, a more and more luminous

divine response to the Divine Force, but not to any other; and there will be as a result the growing inrush of a great and conscious miraculous working from above. In the last period there is no effort at all, no set method, no fixed sadhana; the place of endeavour and tapasya will be taken by a natural, simple, powerful and happy disclosing of the flower of the Divine out of the bud of a purified and perfected terrestrial nature. These are the natural successions of the action of the Yoga." (CWSA 23: 87)

7.

"The means towards this supreme end [of the divine way of life] is a self-giving of all our nature to the Divine. Everything must be given to the Divine within us, to the universal All and to the transcendent Supreme. An absolute concentration of our will, our heart and our thought on that one and manifold Divine, an unreserved self-consecration of our whole being to the Divine alone—this is the decisive movement, the turning of the ego to That which is infinitely greater than itself, its self-giving and indispensable surrender." (CWSA 23: 89)

XXVIII—Concentration Between the Eyebrows

1.

"There is the famous rule of concentrating between the eyebrows—the centre of the inner mind, of occult vision, of the will is there. What you do is to think firmly from there on whatever you make the object of your concentration or else try to see the image of it from there. If you succeed in this, then after a time you feel that your whole consciousness is centred there in that place—of course for the time being. After doing it for some time and often, it becomes easy and normal. I hope this is clear. Well, in this Yoga, you do the same, not necessarily at that particular spot between the eyebrows, but anywhere in the head or at the centre of the chest where the physiologists have fixed the cardiac centre." (CWSA 29: 308)

2.

"The power of concentration in the eyebrows is to open the centre there, liberate the inner mind and vision and the inner or Yogic consciousness and its experiences and powers. From here also one can open upwards and act also in the lower centres; but the danger of this process is that one may get shut up in one's mental spiritual formations and not come out of them into the free and integral spiritual experience and knowledge and integral change of the being and nature." (CWSA 29: 307)

3.

"It is not necessary to have the mind quiet in order to see the lights—that depends only on the opening of the subtle vision in the centre which is in the forehead between the eyebrows. Many people get that as soon as they start sadhana. It can even be developed by effort and concentration without sadhana by some who have it to a small extent as an inborn faculty. The quietude of the mind is needed for other things, such as the feeling of the presence of the Mother etc." (CWSA 30: 117)

4.

"If the concentration goes naturally to the centre between the eyebrows which is the centre of inner mind and its thought, will and vision, there is no harm in that." (CWSA 30: 93)

XXIX—Purity Is the Condition in which Concentration Becomes Entire and Effective

1.

"Along with purity and as a help to bring it about, concentration. Purity and concentration are indeed two aspects, feminine and masculine, passive and active, of the same status of being; purity is the condition in which concentration becomes entire, rightly effective, omnipotent; by concentration purity does its works and without it would only lead to a state of peaceful quiescence and eternal repose. Their opposites are also closely connected; for we have seen that impurity is a confusion of dharmas, a lax, mixed and mutually entangled action of the different parts of the being; and this confusion proceeds from an absence of right concentration of its knowledge on its energies in the embodied Soul. The fault of our nature is first an inert subjection to the impacts of things as they come in upon the mind pell-mell without order or control and then a haphazard imperfect concentration managed fitfully, irregularly with a more or less chance emphasis on this or on that object according as they happen to interest, not the higher soul or the judging and discerning intellect, but the restless, leaping, fickle, easily tired, easily distracted lower mind which is the chief enemy of our progress. In such a condition purity, the right working of the functions, the clear, unstained and

luminous order of the being is an impossibility; the various workings, given over to the chances of the environment and external influences, must necessarily run into each other and clog, divert, distract, pervert. Equally, without purity the complete, equal, flexible concentration of the being in right thought, right will, right feeling or secure status of spiritual experience is not possible. Therefore the two must proceed together, each helping the victory of the other, until we arrive at that eternal calm from which may proceed some partial image in the human being of the eternal, omnipotent and omniscient activity. (CWSA 23: 317–318)

2.

"You are right also in thinking that this is really the most important part of your Yoga. The Rajayogis are right in putting purification in front of everything and a preliminary to successful meditation—as I was also right in putting it in front along with concentration in the *Synthesis*. You have only to look around you to see that experiences and even realisations cannot bring one to the goal if this is not done—at any moment they can fall owing to the vital still being impure and full of ego." (CWSA 31: 232)

3.

"Aspire and concentrate for the purification and illumination of the vital. The vital once clear with the

Mother's Light and Force in it, it will be easier for the Force to work on the body." (CWSA 32: 232)

4.

"The experience of the Fire is quite correct,—it is the great fire of purification and concentration (i.e. gathering up of the consciousness and turning it fixedly towards the Divine), the psychic fire which all must pass through so as to reach the Mother permanently and completely." (CWSA 30: 369)

5.

"It is the Agni fire that you feel. Agni is at once a fire of aspiration, a fire of purification, a fire of tapasya, a fire of transformation.

Agni in the form of an aspiration full of concentrated calm and surrender is certainly the first thing to be lighted in the heart." (CWSA 30: 371–372)

XXX—Perfection in Concentration Brings Spiritual Experience

1.

"*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?*

Yes. 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.

To have this experience is it necessary to concentrate every time?

In the beginning, yes, for you have not the capacity to keep what you have acquired, to maintain your concentration at

its maximum—you slip back and lose even the memory of the experience you have had. But if you once follow a path, it is easier to follow the same path a second time and so on. The second concentration is therefore easier than the first one. You must persevere in your concentration till you come to the point when you no longer lose the inner contact.

From that time onward you must remain in this inner and higher consciousness from where you can do everything. You see your body and the material world and you know what is to be done and how to do it.

That is the first aim of concentration, but naturally not the last.

To attain that concentration much effort is necessary; an immediate or even a quick result is rarely possible. But if the inner door has once been opened, you may be sure that it will open again if you know how to persevere.

As long as the door has not been opened, you may doubt your capacity, but once opened, no more doubt is possible, if you go on willing and aspiring.

This experience has a considerable value." (CWM 4: 8–9)

XXXI—Concentrated Meditation

1.

"It is not the length of the meditations that makes the difference [*in making one vitally and physically strong*]. It is a concentration of the will that is needed." (CWSA 29: 312)

2.

"*What is the difference between meditation and concentration?*

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.

Certainly this indirect action can have an effect, but... I have known in my life people whose capacity for meditation was remarkable but who, when not in

meditation, were quite ordinary men, even at times ill-natured people, who would become furious if their meditation was disturbed. For they had learnt to master only their mind, not the rest of their being.

...

If you have the capacity to concentrate, your meditation will be more interesting and easier. But one can meditate without concentrating. Many follow a chain of ideas in their meditation—it is meditation, not concentration." (CWM 4: 7–8)

3.

"Half an hour's meditation in the day ought to be possible—if only to bring a concentrated habit into the consciousness which will help it, first to be less outward in work and, secondly, to develop a receptive tendency which can bear its fruits even in the work." (CWSA 29: 224–225)

4.

"The attitude of spiritual meditation is to concentrate so as to receive or attain the spiritual truth—what means one takes depends upon the way, the path, the person." (CWSA 29: 301)

5.

"Brain concentration is always a tapasya and necessarily brings a strain. It is only if one is lifted out of the brain

mind altogether that the strain of mental concentration disappears.

6.

Postures for Concentration or Meditation

"The sitting motionless posture is the natural posture for concentrated meditation—walking and standing are active conditions suited for the dispense of energy and the activity of the mind. It is only when one has gained the enduring rest and passivity of the consciousness that it is easy to concentrate and receive when walking or doing anything. A fundamental passive condition of the consciousness gathered into itself is the proper poise for concentration and a seated gathered immobility in the body is the best for that. It can be done also lying down, but that position is too passive, tending to be inert rather than gathered. This is the reason why Yogis always sit in an asana. One can accustom oneself to meditate walking, standing, lying, but sitting is the first natural position." (CWSA 29: 311)

7.

"It is by meditation, by concentration, by the constant turning or call [*that aspiration and openness may be cultivated*]—secondly, by the keeping of the mind and vital still for the descent of the Presence, peace, light, Ananda and for the psychic being to emerge." (CWSA 30: 387)

8.

"I said expressly that in the way of meditating of which we spoke, aspiration, prayer, concentration, intensity were a natural part of it; this way was put before you because our experience has been that those who take it go quicker and develop their sadhana, once they get fixed in it, much more easily as well as smoothly than by a distressed, doubtful and anxious straining with revulsions of despondency and turning away from hope and endeavour. We spoke of a steady opening to the Divine with a flow of the force doing its work in the adhar, a poised opening with a quiet mind and heart full of trust and the sunlight of confidence; where do you find that we said a helpless waiting must be your programme?" (CWSA 31: 194)

9.

"In meditation you must call on the Mother and concentrate on the call in your heart till you feel an opening to her or some inner contact with her." (CWSA 32: 158–159)

10.

"Meditation means opening yourself to the Mother, concentrating on aspiration and calling in her force to work and transform you." (CWSA 32: 409)

11.

"It [*the tendency to fall asleep during meditation*] is a common obstacle with all who practise Yoga at the beginning. This sleep disappears gradually in two ways—(1) by the intensifying of the force of concentration—(2) by the sleep itself becoming a kind of swapna samadhi in which one is conscious of inner experiences that are not dreams (i.e. the waking consciousness is lost for the time, but it is replaced not by sleep but by an inward conscious state in which one moves in the supraphysical of the mental or vital being)." (CWSA 29: 320) (CWSA 30: 253–254)

12.

"Meditation is best when it comes spontaneously. But there should be full concentration in the work if it is to take the place of meditation." (CWSA 29: 222)

13.

"It is a thing that can be done. It is one of the earliest things that you are taught to do in Yoga: to open the door whenever one wants. It is the result of meditation or concentration or aspiration: all these processes are followed to open the door somewhere.

And generally you try to open it precisely towards the highest thing, not towards anything whatever. For the other kind of receptivity people unfortunately always have …" (CWM 5: 207)

14.

"If it is the way of *ahaitukī bhakti* that you want to follow, that can be no obstacle; for there can be none better. For in that way everything can be made a means—poetry and music for instance become not merely poetry and music and not merely even an expression of bhakti, but themselves a means of bringing the experience of love and bhakti. Meditation itself becomes not an effort of mental concentration, but a flow of love and adoration and worship. If simply and sincerely followed, the way of *ahaitukī bhakti* can lead as far as any other." (CWSA 29: 355)

15.

"There is another kind of meditation which consists in being as quiet as one can be but without trying to stop all thoughts, … instead of that you gather together all your consciousness and remain as quiet and peaceful as possible, you detach yourself from external things as though they do not interest you at all, and all of a sudden, you brighten the flame of aspiration and throw into it everything that comes to you so that the flame may rise higher and higher, higher and higher; you identify yourself with it and you go up to the extreme point of your consciousness and aspiration, thinking of nothing else—simply, an aspiration which mounts, mounts, mounts, without thinking a minute of the result, of what may

happen and especially of what may not, and above all without desiring that something may come—simply, the joy of an aspiration which mounts and mounts and mounts, intensifying itself more and more in a constant concentration. And there I may assure you that what happens is the best that can happen. That is, it is the maximum of your possibilities which is realised when you do this. These possibilities may be very different according to individuals. … And if you succeed in living consciously in this flame, in this column of mounting aspiration, you will see that even if you do not have an immediate result, after a time something will happen." (CWM 4: 104–105)

16.

"*Mother, we sometimes have sudden ideas. Where do they come from and how do they work in the head?*

Where do they come from?—From the mental atmosphere.

Why do they come?... Perhaps you meet them on your way as one meets a passer-by in a public square.Most often it is that; you are on a road where ideas are moving about and it so happens that you meet this particular one and it passes through your head. Obviously, those who are in the habit of meditating, of concentrating, and for whom intellectual problems have a very concrete and tangible reality, by concentrating their minds they attract associated ideas, and a 'company of ideas' is formed which they

organise so as to solve a problem or clarify the question they are considering. But for this, one must have the habit of mental concentration and precisely that philosophical mind I was speaking about, for which ideas are living entities with their own life, which are organised on the mental chess-board like pawns in a game of chess: one takes them, moves them, places them, organises them, one makes a coherent whole out of these ideas, which are individual, independent entities with affinities among themselves, and which organise themselves according to inner laws. But for this, one must also have the habit of meditation, reflection, analysis, deduction, mental organisation. Otherwise, if one is just 'like that', if one lives life as it comes, then it is exactly like a public square: there are roads and on the roads people pass by, and then you find yourself at crossroads and it all passes through your head—sometimes even ideas without any connection between them, so much so that if you were to write down what passes through your head, it would make a string of admirable nonsense!" (CWM 9: 250–251)

XXXII—Concentration Is a More Active State than Meditation

1.

"Concentration is a more active state [than meditation]. You may concentrate mentally, you may concentrate vitally, psychically, physically, and you may concentrate integrally. Concentration or the capacity to gather oneself at one point is more difficult than meditation. You may gather together one portion of your being or consciousness or you may gather together the whole of your consciousness or even fragments of it, that is, the concentration may be partial, total or integral, and in each case the result will be different." (CWM 4: 8)

2.

"*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?*

Yes. 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.

To have this experience is it necessary to concentrate every time?

In the beginning, yes, for you have not the capacity to keep what you have acquired, to maintain your concentration at its maximum—you slip back and lose even the memory of the experience you have had. But if you once follow a path, it is easier to follow the same path a second time and so on. The second concentration is therefore easier than the first one. You must persevere in your concentration till you come to the point when you no longer lose the inner contact.

From that time onward you must remain in this inner and higher consciousness from where you can do everything. You see your body and the material world and you know what is to be done and how to do it.

That is the first aim of concentration, but naturally not the last.

To attain that concentration much effort is necessary; an immediate or even a quick result is rarely possible. But if the inner door has once been opened, you may be sure that it will open again if you know how to persevere.

As long as the door has not been opened, you may doubt your capacity, but once opened, no more doubt is possible, if you go on willing and aspiring.
This experience has a considerable value." (CWM 4: 8–9)

3.

"But for the moment progress through concentration and inner experience is the first necessity for you.

This [*stream of thoughts*] is what we call the activity of the mind, which always comes in the way of the concentration and tries to create doubt and dispersion of the energies. It can be got rid of in two ways, by rejecting it and pushing it out, till it remains as an outside force only—by bringing down the higher peace and light into the physical mind." (CWSA 29: 225)

4.

"The methods described in the account [*of Ramana Maharshi's technique of self-realisation*] are the well-established methods of Jnanayoga—(1) one-pointed concentration followed by thought-suspension, (2) the method of distinguishing or finding out the true self by

separating it from mind, life, body (this I have seen described by him [*Brunton*] more at length in another book) and coming to the pure I behind; this also can disappear into the Impersonal Self." (CWSA 29: 496)

5.

"Dhyana is inner concentration of the consciousness, meditation, going inside in Samadhi. Dhyana, tapasya and aradhana are all parts of sadhana." (CWSA 29: 215)

6.

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

7.

"The ease and peace are felt very deep and far within because they are in the psychic and the psychic is very deep within us, covered over by the mind and vital. When you meditate you open to the psychic, become aware of your psychic consciousness deep within and feel these things. In order that this ease and peace and happiness may become strong and stable and felt in all the being and in the body, you have to go still deeper within and bring out the full force of the psychic into the physical. This can most easily be done by regular concentration and

meditation with the aspiration for this true consciousness. It can be done by work also, by dedication, by doing the work for the Divine only without thought of self and keeping the idea of consecration to the Mother always in the heart. But this is not easy to do perfectly." (CWSA 29: 299)

8.

"What do you call meditation? Shutting the eyes and concentrating? It is only one method for calling down the true consciousness. To join with the true consciousness or feel its descent is the only thing important and if it comes without the orthodox method, as it always did with me, so much the better. Meditation is only a means or device, the true movement is when even walking, working or speaking one is still in sadhana." (CWSA 29: 300)

9.

"It is of course because of the old habit of the mental consciousness that it goes on receiving the thoughts from outside in spite of its being a fatigue—not that it wants them, but that they are accustomed to come and the mind mechanically lets them in and attends to them by force of habit. 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. But often when one tries this, the thoughts become very active and resist the silencing process and that is very troublesome." (CWSA 29: 302–303)

10.

"The mind is always in activity, but we do not observe fully what it is doing, but allow ourselves to be carried away in the stream of continual thinking. When we try to concentrate, this stream of self-moved mechanical thinking becomes prominent to our observation. It is the first normal obstacle (the other is sleep during meditation) to the effort towards Yoga." (CWSA 29: 303)

11.

"It is better to make the deeper concentration when you are alone or quiet. Outward sounds ought not to disturb you." (CWSA 29: 312)

12.

"No use doing asanas and pranayam. It is not necessary to burn with passion. What is needed is a patient increasing of the power of concentration and steady aspiration so that the silence you speak of may fix in the heart and spread to the other members. Then the physical mind and subconscient can be cleared and quieted." (CWSA 29: 439)

13.

"To keep the consciousness awake you must set apart a certain time every day for concentration and remembering the Mother and keeping yourself in contact with us. What is gained is not lost by interruption, but it goes behind and may take time to come out again—so the thread should not be cut." (CWSA 29: 312)

14.

"It is quite natural that at first there should be the condition of calm and peace only when you sit for concentration. What is important is that there should be this condition whenever you sit and the pressure for it always there. But at other times the result is at first only a certain mental quiet and freedom from thoughts. Afterwards when the condition of peace is quite settled in the inner being—for it is the inner into which you enter whenever you concentrate—then it begins to come out and control the outer, so that the calm and peace remain even when working, mixing with others, talking or other occupations. For then whatever the outer consciousness is doing, one feels the inner being calm within—indeed one feels the inner being as one's real self while the outer is something superficial through which the inner acts on life." (CWSA 29: 313)

15.

"The feeling of inability is just the thing you have to reject. It is true only of the physical material consciousness and it is true of everybody in the physical consciousness, because that is something very inert and all that it can do is open itself, remain quiet and receive the Influence. But there is no inability in the rest of the being: it can will and reject. If confusion and obscurity come, it is not bound to accept them,—it can open to the true Force and throw them away; it can keep itself open even when the forces of confusion throw themselves upon it. Only the concentration also must be quiet and steady,—not struggling and restless." (CWSA 31: 409)

16.

"An intense concentration bringing struggle is not what is needed, but a very quiet attitude of self-opening. Not any effort of sadhana just now, but the recovery of tranquillity and ease is what is wanted at present to restore the opening of the nature." (CWSA 31: 409)

17.

"It was rather that the active mind became more quiet so that the movements of the mechanical mind became more evident —that is what often happens. What has to be done in that case is to detach oneself from these movements and concentrate without farther attention to them. They

are then likely to sink into quietude or fall away." (CWSA 29: 314)

18.

"When useless thoughts interfere with my concentration, how am I to remember the Mother and lay them before her?

Aspire at the time—they will of themselves be open to the Mother." (CWSA 32: 526–527)

19.

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

20.

"You are probably paying too much attention to them [*mechanical thoughts*]. It is quite possible to concentrate and let the mechanical activity pass unnoticed." (CWSA 29: 315)

21.

"It is not a fact that when there is obscurity or inertia, one cannot concentrate or meditate. If one has in the inner being the steady will to do it, it can be done." (CWSA 29: 317–318)

22.

"If the mind gets tired, naturally it is difficult to concentrate—unless you have become separated from the mind." (CWSA 29: 318)

23.

"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." (CWSA 30: 224)

24.

"Concentration is very helpful and necessary—the more one concentrates (of course in the limits of the body's capacity without straining it), the more the force of the Yoga grows. But you must be prepared for the meditation being sometimes not successful and not get upset by it—for that variability of the meditations happens to

everybody. There are different causes for it. But it is mostly something physical that interferes, either the need of the body to take time to assimilate what has come or been done or sometimes inertia or dullness due to causes such as those you mention or others. The best thing is to remain quiet and not get nervous or dejected—till the force acts again." (CWSA 29: 318)

25.

"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: 11–12)

26.

"If I cannot concentrate or meditate, I simply imagine myself lying eternally in the Mother's lap and going out when she sends me out.

This is the best possible kind of concentration." (CWSA 32: 147)

XXXIII—Collective Concentrations at the Ashram Playground

1.

"*During the concentration that we have here*1 [*collective 'concentrations' at the Ashram Playground*] *together, on what should we concentrate?*

Can anyone tell me what this concentration is and why we have it? It is a very interesting question, it concerns everybody. …

In the meditations we formerly used to have there [*at the Ashram*], when we had a morning or evening meditation, my work was to unify the consciousness of everyone and lift it as high as I could towards the Divine. Those who were able to feel the movement followed it. This was ordinary meditation with an aspiration and ascent towards the Divine. Here, at the Playground, the work is to unify all who are here, make them open and *bring down* the divine force into them. It is the opposite movement and that is why this concentration cannot replace the other, even as the other cannot replace this one. What happens here is exceptional—in the other meditation [*at the Ashram*] I gathered together the consciousness of all who were present and, with the power of aspiration, lifted it towards the Divine, that is, made each one of you progress a little. Here, on the other hand, I take you as you are;

each one of you comes saying, 'Here we are with our whole day's activities, we were busy with our body, here it is, we offer to you all our movements, just as they were, just as we are.' And my work is to unify all that, make of it a homogeneous mass and, in answer to this offering (which each one can make in his own way), to open every consciousness, widen the receptivity, make a unity of this receptivity and bring down the Force. So at that moment each one of you, if you are very quiet and attentive, will surely receive something. You will not always be aware of it, but you will receive something.

In March 1964, the following question was put to the Mother:

And now that you are no longer physically present at the Playground concentrations, what happens?

I hope people have made some progress and do not need the physical presence to feel the Help and the Force." (CWM 4: 105–106)

2.

"*The concentration we have here and the meditation we used to have in the past, are they the same?*

No, I told you this the other day, the concentration we have now is the opposite of meditation. In the common meditation we used to have, I tried to unify the consciousness of all who were present and to lift it in an aspiration towards higher regions; it was a movement of ascent, of aspiration—whereas what we do here, in concentration, is a movement of descent. Instead of an aspiration which rises up, what is required is a receptivity which opens so that the Force may enter into you. There are many ways of doing this; each one according to his particular nature should find out the best method. What is asked here is a receptive offering, not of the body or the mind or the vital, of a piece of your being, but of your entire being. No other thing is asked of you, only to *open* yourself; the rest of the work I undertake.

In the meditation there I wanted each one to kindle in himself a flame of aspiration and to rise up as high as possible." (CWM 4: 122)

XXXIV—It Is Easier to Concentrate on the Strongest Part of Your Being

1.

"An Integral Yoga includes as a vital and indispensable element in its total and ultimate aim the conversion of the whole being into a higher spiritual consciousness and a larger divine existence. Our parts of will and action, our parts of knowledge, our thinking being, our emotional being, our being of life, all our self and nature must seek the Divine, enter into the Infinite, unite with the Eternal. But man's present nature is limited, divided, unequal,—it is easiest for him to concentrate in the strongest part of his being and follow a definite line of progress proper to his nature: only rare individuals have the strength to take a large immediate plunge straight into the sea of the Divine Infinity. Some therefore must choose as a starting-point a concentration in thought or contemplation or the mind's one-pointedness to find the eternal reality of the Self in them; others can more easily withdraw into the heart to meet there the Divine, the Eternal: yet others are predominantly dynamic and active; for these it is best to centre themselves in the will and enlarge their being through works. United with the Self and source of all by their surrender of their will into its infinity, guided in their works by the secret Divinity within or surrendered to the Lord of the cosmic action as the master and mover of all

their energies of thought, feeling, act, becoming by this enlargement of being selfless and universal, they can reach by works some first fullness of a spiritual status.” (CWSA 23: 279)

XXXV—Concentrate on What You Want to Be

1.

"Of course it is necessary to see one's own weaknesses, but it is not good to dwell too much upon them,—it only brings sadness and restlessness and despondency. Fix your mind rather on what you want to be, for that concentration brings the power to become it—it is the best way also to get rid of the defects and weaknesses; for it is when something strong and positive fills the nature that it changes and its defects begin to disappear." (CWSA 31: 739)

2.

"And finally, lest you get discouraged by your own faults, the Dhammapada gives you this solacing image: the purest lily can spring out of a heap of rubbish by the wayside. That is to say, there is nothing so rotten that it cannot give birth to the purest realisation.

Whatever may be the past, whatever may be the faults committed, whatever the ignorance in which one might have lived, one carries deep within oneself the supreme purity which can translate itself into a wonderful realisation.

The whole point is to think of that, to concentrate on that and not to be concerned with all the difficulties and obstacles and hindrances.

Concentrate exclusively on what you want to be, forget as entirely as possible what you do not want to be." (CWM 3: 215)

3.

"It [*retracing one's steps from the vital into the psychic*] can be done, if you refuse to be preoccupied with the idea of your difficulties and concentrate on really helpful and positive things. Be more cheerful and confident. Sex and Doubt and Co. are there, no doubt, but the Divine is there also inside you. Open your eyes and look and look till the veil is rent and you see Him or Her!" (CWSA 31: 742–743)

4.

"You have now begun to see the difficulties that are still there in your vital; keep to that clear perception, let it grow clearer and more precise. Concentrate on what you have to do and do not let yourself be distracted this way and that by irrelevant preoccupations or any other influence." (CWSA 32: 350)

5.

"It is evident that the need of a concentration indispensable for the transition out of the Ignorance may make it necessary for the seeker to gather together his energies and focus them only on that which will help the transition and to leave aside or subordinate for the time all

that is not directly turned towards the one object. He may find that this or that pursuit of human knowledge with which he was accustomed to deal by the surface power of the mind still brings him by reason of this tendency or habit out of the depths to the surface or down from the heights which he has climbed or is nearing to lower levels." (CWSA 23: 144–145)

6.

"You are listening too much to the suggestions of the outer consciousness, 'not being able', etc. etc. Since you did begin to open a little for a time, it shows that you are able. You have to get back to that movement; for that you must persuade this outer vital not to go on repeating, 'I am not able, my efforts cannot succeed, I am too crooked etc.'—or if it goes on, you must not listen to it. You must affirm and concentrate on the possibility that was shown you and not on the supposed impossibility." (CWSA 31: 131)

7.

"Yoga is in essence the union of the soul with the immortal being and consciousness and delight of the Divine, effected through the human nature with a result of development into the divine nature of being, whatever that may be, so far as we can conceive it in mind and realise it in spiritual activity. Whatever we see of this Divine and fix our concentrated effort upon it, that we can become or grow

into some kind of unity with it or at the lowest into tune and harmony with it." (CWSA 24: 587)

8.

"Remain quiet, within, concentrated only on receiving strength and health, confident that we are with you all the time, and you will soon be all right." (CWSA 31: 562)

9.

"You think too much of adverse forces. That kind of preoccupation causes much unnecessary struggle. Fix your mind on the positive side—open to the Mother's power, concentrate on her protection, call for light, calm and peace and purity and growth into the divine consciousness and knowledge." (CWSA 32: 322)

XXXVI—It Is Bad to Concentrate on What One Does Not Want to Be

1.

"And in conclusion Sri Aurobindo declares that thought is not essential to existence, it is not the cause of existence, but is just the process, the instrument of becoming, for thought is a principle of precise formulation which has the power of creating forms. And as an illustration Sri Aurobindo says that all that one thinks one is, one can, by the very fact of that thinking, become. This knowledge of the fact that *all* that one thinks one can be, is a very important key for the development of the being, and not only from the point of view of the possibilities of the being, but also from that of the control and choice of what one will be, of what one wants to be.

This makes us understand the necessity of not admitting into ourselves any thought which destroys aspiration or the creation of the truth of our being. It reveals the considerable importance of not allowing what one doesn't want to be or doesn't want to do to formulate itself into thought within the being. Because to think these things is already a beginning of their realisation. From every point of view it is bad to concentrate on what one doesn't want, on what one has to reject, what one refuses to be, for the very fact that the thought is there gives to things one wants to reject a sort of right of existence within

oneself. This explains the considerable importance of not letting destructive suggestions, thoughts of ill-will, hatred, destruction enter; for merely to think of them is already to give them a power of realisation. Sri Aurobindo says that thought is not the cause of existence but an intermediary, the instrument which gives form to life, to creation, and the control of this instrument is of foremost importance if one wants disorder and all that is anti-divine to disappear from creation.

One must not admit bad thoughts into oneself under the pretext that they are merely thoughts. They are tools of execution. And one should not allow them to exist in oneself if one doesn't want them to do their work of destruction." (CWM 8: 396–397)

2.

"The statement [*It is a mistake to dwell on the lower nature and its obstacles, which is the negative side of the Sadhana. . . . The positive side of experience of the descent is the more important thing.*] is a general one and like all general statements subject to qualification according to circumstances. What I meant was to discourage what some do which is to be always dwelling on their difficulties and shortcomings only, for that makes them turn for ever like squirrels in a cage always in the same circle of difficulties without the least breaking of light through the clouds. The sentence would be more accurate or generally

applicable if it were written ‘dwell too much’ or ‘dwell solely’. Naturally, without rejection nothing can be done. And in hard periods or moments concentration on the difficulties is inevitable. Also in the early stages one has often to do a great amount of clearance work so that the road can be followed at all.” (CWSA 31: 742)

3.

“Difficulties and perplexities can never be got rid of by the mind brooding on them and trying in that way to get out of them; this habit of the mind only makes them recur without a solution and keeps up by brooding the persistent tangle. It is from something above and outside the perplexities that the solution must come. The difficulty of the physical mind—not the true thinking intelligence—is that it does not want to believe in this larger consciousness outside itself because it is not aware of it; and it remains shut like a box in itself, not admitting the light that is all round it and pressing to get in. It is a subtle law of the action of consciousness that if you stress difficulties—you have to observe them, of course, but not stress them, they will quite sufficiently do that for themselves—the difficulties tend to stick or even increase; on the contrary, if you put your whole stress on faith and aspiration and concentrate steadily on what you aspire to, that will sooner or later tend towards realisation. It is this change of stress,

a change in the poise and attitude of the mind, that will be the more helpful process.

As for details, the method of the mind concentrating on details and trying to put them right is a slow and tardy one; it has to be done, but as a subordinate process, not the chief one. If it succeeds at all, it is because after some period of struggle and stress, something is released and there is an opening and the larger consciousness of which I speak gets through and produces some general result. But the progress is much more rapid if one can make the opening the main thing and keep the dealing with details as something resultant and subordinate. When there is this opening, some essential (therefore general) progress can be made and, as you yourself say, 'express and translate itself into details'. The mind is always trying to handle details and construct out of them some general result; but what is above mind and even the best powers of the higher ranges of mind tend rather to bring about some *essential* change and make it or let it express itself, translate itself in the necessary details." (CWSA 31: 739–740)

XXXVII—What Helps Concentration

1. **When the mind falls quiet the concentration becomes strong**

"When the mind falls quiet and the concentration becomes strong and the aspiration intense, then there is a beginning of experience. The more the faith, the more rapid the result is likely to be. For the rest one must not depend on one's own efforts only, but succeed in establishing a contact with the Divine and a receptivity to the Mother's Power and Presence." (CWSA 32: 217)

2. **Silence helps to maintain one's inner peace and concentration**
3. **If one makes an effort to reduce the noise to a minimum, one realises that many things are done better and faster in silence**

"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." (CWM 12: 58)

4. **The vital must be quiet, free of desires or at any rate one must be able to control the vital so that it shall not interfere with the concentration**

"For the mind to be quiet, the vital must be quiet, free of desires etc. or at any rate one must be able to control them so that they shall not interfere with the concentration." (CWSA 31: 127)

5. **The best help for concentration is to receive the Mother's calm and peace into your mind**
6. **The Mother's calm and peace is there above you, only the mind and its centres have to open to it**

"The best help for concentration is to receive the Mother's calm and peace into your mind. It is there above you—only the mind and its centres have to open to it. It is what the Mother is pushing upon you in the evening meditation." (CWSA 29: 300)

7. **In the beginning of the psychic opening, the concentration will come of itself**

"Now that condition is the beginning of the psychic opening; there is of course much more that afterwards

comes to complete it but this is the fundamental condition into which all the rest can most easily come. In this condition there may and will be call, prayer, aspiration. Intensity, concentration will come of themselves, not by a hard effort or tense strain on the nature. Rejection of wrong movements, frank confession of defects are not only not incompatible, but helpful to it; but this attitude makes the rejection, the confession easy, spontaneous, entirely complete and sincere and effective. That is the experience of all who have consented to take this attitude." (CWSA 31: 191)

XXXVIII—When You Get a Decisive Experience, Remain Concentrated and Assimilate It

1.

"A progress made often stirs the adverse forces to activity, they want to diminish its effect as much as possible. When you get a decisive experience of this kind, you should remain concentrated and assimilate it—avoiding self-dispersion and all externalising of the consciousness." (CWSA 31: 770)

XXXIX—A Spontaneous Experience of the Psychic Being Can Come with Intensity of Concentration

1.

"Many ways have always been given, but a way you have been taught, a way you have read about in books or heard from a teacher, does not have the effective value of **a** spontaneous experience which has come without any apparent reason, and which is simply the blossoming of the souls awakening, one second of contact with your psychic being which shows you the best way for you, the one most within your reach, which you will then have to follow with perseverance to reach the goal—one second which shows you how to start, the beginning.... Some have this in dreams at night; some have it at any odd time: something one sees which awakens in one this new consciousness, something one hears, a beautiful landscape, beautiful music, or else simply a few words one reads, or else the intensity of concentration in some effort—anything at all, there are a thousand reasons and thousands of ways of having it. But, I repeat, all those who are destined to realise have had this at least once in their life. It may be very fleeting, it may have come when they were very young, but always at least once in one's life one has the experience of what true consciousness is. Well, that is the best indication of the path to be followed." (CWM 8: 404)

2.

"These experiences come to you suddenly in a flash, for a second, a moment in your life, you don't know why or how.... There are other ways, other experiences—they are innumerable, they vary according to people; but with this, with one minute, one second of such an existence, one catches the tail of the thing. So one must remember that, try to relive it, go to the depths of the experience, recall it, aspire, concentrate. This is the starting point, the end of the guiding thread, the clue. For all those who are destined to find their inner being, the truth of their being, there is always at least one moment in life when they were no longer the same, perhaps just like a lightning-flash—but that is enough. It indicates the road one should take, it is the door that opens on this path. And so you must pass through the door, and with perseverance and an unfailing steadfastness seek to renew the state which will lead you to something more real and more total." (CWM 8: 403–404)

XL—Awakened Psychic Being Wants to Concentrate the Mind on the Divine

"It is the soul, the psychic being in you, behind the heart, that is awake and wants to concentrate the mind on the Divine. It is the nature of the mind to go out to other things, but now when it does that, there is the unease in the heart, the psychic sorrow because the heart feels at once that this is wrong and the head also aches because of the resistance to the Divine Force at work. This is a thing that often happens at an early stage, after the opening of the consciousness to the sadhana." (CWSA 30: 374–375)

XLI—Concentrate on Openness and Surrender instead of Looking for Progress

1.

"*X* is probably making two mistakes—first, expecting outward expressions of love from the Mother; second, looking for progress instead of concentrating on openness and surrender without demand of a return. These are two mistakes which sadhaks are constantly making. If one opens, if one surrenders, then as soon as the nature is ready, progress will come of itself; but the personal concentration for progress brings difficulties and resistance and disappointment because the mind is not looking at things from the right angle. … He must learn to be very quiet in mind and vital and consecrate himself so that he may become conscious as well as receive." (CWSA 32: 481)

2.

"To secure that better, do not spend the time at your disposal in speech—especially if anything of the depression remains with you, it will waste the time in discussing things which cannot help the true consciousness to predominate. 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)

3.

"Complete surrender: one is now only a docile instrument, a faithful servant before the Supreme Master. The Love is so complete that it causes a detachment from all that is not the Divine Absolute and perfect concentration on Him." (CWM 2: 130)

XLII—Continuity of Concentrated Spiritual Life

1.
"It is a question between the continuity of your concentrated spiritual life and the call of old demands belonging to the consciousness that you have left behind you. The Mother, as you well know, does not favour even a brief return to the old atmosphere once one is in the spiritual life. For one who has not yet really begun or is living as yet only a tepid half-formed surface sadhana, it might be different. The old life always pulls to have the sadhak back, to renew its ties, to get a fresh lease of control over his vital. If one yields it will redouble its importunities, bring new occasions for calling again; the sadhana here gets broken and has to be picked up again with effort. All the same if people insist on going or have a strong desire to go, they are allowed sometimes to do so at their own risk, but the Mother never sends anybody—unless there is her work to do. That is the position." (CWSA 32: 370)

XLIII—Higher Consciousness Is a Concentrated Consciousness

1.

"The higher consciousness is a concentrated consciousness, concentrated in the Divine Unity and in the working out of the Divine Will, not dispersed and rushing about after this or that mental idea or vital desire or physical need as is the ordinary human consciousness—also not invaded by a hundred haphazard thoughts, feelings and impulses, but master of itself, centred and harmonious." (CWSA 28: 159)

2.

"Once (peace) it begins to come, it usually increases its force along with the receptivity of the sadhak until it can come at all times and under all conditions and stay longer and longer till it is stable. The sadhak on his side has to keep his consciousness as quiet and still as possible to receive it. The Peace, Power, Light, Ananda of the higher spiritual consciousness are there in all veiled above. A certain opening upwards is needed for it to descend—the quietude of the mind and a certain wide concentrated passivity to the descending Influence are the best conditions for the descent." (CWSA 30: 481–482)

3.

"Or you can concentrate to call down from above you (where it always is) first her calm and peace, then her power and light and her ananda. It is always there above the head—but superconscient to the human mind—by aspiration and concentration it can become conscient to it and the adhar can open to it so that it descends and enters into mind, life and body."
(CWSA 32:155)

XLIV—A United Concentration of Persons Can Be a Great Force

1.

"A united concentration rightly done can be a great force. There is an old saying that if twelve sincere persons unite their will and their aspiration and call the Divine, the Divine is bound to manifest. But the will must be one-pointed, the aspiration sincere. For those who make the attempt can be united in inertia or even in mistaken or perverse desire, and the result is then likely to be disastrous." (CWM 3: 98)

XLV—Advantages of Concentration

1.

"*When one works and wants to do one's best, one needs much time. But generally we don't have much time, we are in a hurry. How to do one's best when one is in a hurry?*

It is a very interesting subject and I wanted to speak to you about it in detail, one day. Generally when men are in a hurry, they do not do completely what they have to do or they do badly what they do. Well, there is a third way, it is to intensify one's concentration. If you do that you can gain half the time, even from a very short time. Take a very ordinary example: to have your bath and to dress; the time needed varies with people, doesn't it? But let us say, half an hour is required for doing everything without losing time and without hurrying. Then, if you are in a hurry, one of two things happens: you don't wash so well or you dress badly! But there is another way—to concentrate one's attention and one's energy, think only of what one is doing and not of anything else, not to make a movement too much, to make the exact movement in the most exact way, and (it is an experience lived, I can speak of it with certitude) you can do in fifteen minutes what you were formerly doing in half an hour, and do it as well, at times even better, without forgetting anything, without leaving out anything, simply by the intensity of the concentration.

And this is the best answer to all those who say, 'Oh, if one wants to do things well, one must have time.' This is not true. For all that you do—study, play, work—there is only one solution: to increase one's power of concentration. And when you acquire this concentration, it is no longer tiring. Naturally, in the beginning, it creates a tension, but when you have grown used to it, the tension diminishes, and a moment comes when what fatigues you is to be not thus concentrated, to disperse yourself, allow yourself to be swallowed by all kinds of things, and not to concentrate on what you do. One can succeed in doing things even better and more quickly by the power of concentration. And in this way you can make use of work as a means of growth; otherwise you have this vague idea that work must be done "disinterestedly", but there is a great danger there, for one is very quick to confuse disinterestedness with indifference." (CWM 4: 137–138)

2.

"When the consciousness feels imprisoned within its too narrow external mould, what should be done?

You must particularly not be violent, for if you are violent, you will come out of it tired, exhausted, without any result. You must concentrate all the forces of aspiration. If you are conscious of the inner flame, you should put into this flame all that you find strongest in you by way of

aspiration, of a call, and hold yourself as quiet as you can, calling, with a deep reliance that the answer will come; and when you are in this state, with your aspiration and concentrated force, with your inner flame, press gently upon this kind of outer crust, without violence, but with insistence, as long as you can, without getting agitated, irritated or excited. You must be perfectly quiet, must call and push.

It will not succeed the first time. You must begin again as many times as is necessary, but suddenly, one day... you are on the other side! Then you emerge in an ocean of light.

If you fight, if you are restless, if you struggle, you will get nothing at all; and if you become irritable you will only get a headache, that is all.

Yes, it is that. To gather together all your power of aspiration, make of it something intensely concentrated, in an absolute tranquillity, to be conscious of your inner flame and throw into it all you can that it may burn ever higher and higher, and then call with your consciousness and, slowly, push. You are sure to succeed one day." (CWM 4: 100)

3.

"If you are in the true consciousness, the knowledge you have will also be of the truth. Then, too, you can know directly, by being one with what you know. If a problem is

put before you, if you are asked what is to be done in a particular matter, you can then, by looking with enough attention and concentration, receive spontaneously the required knowledge and the true answer. It is not by any careful application of theory that you reach the knowledge or by working it out through a mental process. The scientific mind needs these methods to come to its conclusions. But the Yogi's knowledge is direct and immediate; it is not deductive." (CWM 3: 92)

XLVI—Concentrate upon What One Is Doing

1.

"There we are. When you are at school, you must become the concentration which tries to catch what the teacher is saying, or the thought which enters you or the knowledge you are given. That is what you must be. You must not think of yourself but only of what you want to learn. And you will see that your capacities will immediately be doubled.

What gives most the feeling of inferiority, of limitation, smallness, impotence, is always this turning back upon oneself, this shutting oneself up in the bounds of a microscopic ego. One must widen oneself, open the doors. And the best way is to be able to concentrate upon what one is doing instead of concentrating upon oneself." (CWM 4: 363–364)

2.

"You know this, I have already told you this: if you want to do something well, whatever it may be, any kind of work, the least thing, play a game, write a book, do painting or music or run a race, anything at all, if you want to do it well, you must *become* what you are doing and not remain a small person looking at himself doing it; for if one looks at oneself acting, one is... one is still in complicity with the ego. If, in oneself, one succeeds in becoming what one

does, it is a great progress. In the least little details, one must learn this. Take a very amusing instance: you want to fill a bottle from another bottle; you concentrate (you may try it as a discipline, as a gymnastic); well, as long as you are the bottle to be filled, the bottle from which one pours, and the movement of pouring, as long as you are only this, all goes well. But if unfortunately you think at a given moment: 'Ah! It is getting on well, I am managing well', the next moment it spills over! It is the same for everything, for everything. That is why work is a good means of discipline, for if you want to do the work properly, you must *become* the work instead of being someone who works, otherwise you will never do it well. If you remain 'someone who works' and, besides, if your thoughts go vagabonding, then you may be sure that if you are handling fragile things they will break, if you are cooking, you will burn something, or if you are playing a game, you will miss all the balls! It is here, in this, that work is a great discipline. For if truly you want to do it well, this is the only way of doing it." (CWM 4: 362–363)

3.

"You have now begun to see the difficulties that are still there in your vital; keep to that clear perception, let it grow clearer and more precise. Concentrate on what you have to do and do not let yourself be distracted this way and that by irrelevant preoccupations or any other influence." (CWSA 31: 250)

XLVII—Necessity of Self-forgetfulness in Concentration on What One Is Doing

1.

"You see, my child, the unfortunate thing is that you are too busy with yourself. At your age I was exclusively occupied with my studies—informing myself, learning, understanding, knowing. That was my interest, even my passion. My mother, who loved us—my brother and myself—very much, never allowed us to be bad-tempered or dissatisfied or lazy. If we went and complained to her about something or other and told her that we were not satisfied, she would laugh at us and scold us and say to us, 'What is this foolishness? Don't be ridiculous, off you go and work, and don't take any notice of your good or bad moods! That is not interesting at all.'

My mother was perfectly right and I have always been very grateful to her for having taught me discipline and the necessity of self-forgetfulness in concentration on what one is doing.

I have told you this because the anxiety you speak of comes from the fact that you are far too busy with yourself. It would be far better for you to attend more to what you are doing (painting or music), to develop your mind which is still very uncultivated and to learn the elements of knowledge which are indispensable to a man if he does not want to be ignorant and uncultured.

If you worked regularly eight to nine hours a day, you would be hungry and you would eat well and sleep peacefully, and you would have no time to wonder whether you are in a good or a bad mood." (CWM 12: 130) (CWM 16: 121)

XLVIII—Remember the Divine without Disturbing the Concentration on What One Is Doing

1.

"*It sometimes happens that when one is playing one does not remember the Divine, then suddenly one remembers and has the feeling that something breaks and one no longer plays well. Why?*

Because everything is upset. That's the problem! So you think that when you are playing and do not remember, you play well! No, it is not quite that. It is that you do something with a certain concentration—work or play—and you are concentrated, but you have not developed the habit of mixing the remembrance of the Divine with the concentration (which is not difficult, but anyway, you do not have the habit) and then, suddenly the remembrance comes; then two things may happen: either the concentration is broken because you make an abrupt movement to seize the new attitude entering the consciousness, or else you feel a little remorse, a regret, a disquiet: 'Oh! I did not remember'; that suffices, it upsets all you have done. For you change conditions completely. It is not the fact of remembering which makes you no longer play well, it is the fact of having disturbed your concentration. If you could remember without disturbing

the concentration (which is not difficult), you would not only play well but would play better." (CWM 4: 387–388)

2.

"*When we are concentrated in mental movements or intellectual pursuits, why do we sometimes forget or lose touch with the Divine?*

You lose it because your consciousness is still divided. The Divine has not settled into your mind; you are not wholly consecrated to the Divine Life. Otherwise you could concentrate to any extent upon such things and still you would have the sense of being helped and supported by the Divine.

In all pursuits, intellectual or active, your one motto should be, 'Remember and Offer.' Let whatever you do be done as an offering to the Divine. And this too will be an excellent discipline for you; it will prevent you from doing many foolish and useless things." (CWM 3: 25–26)

XLIX—Concentration to Solve Inner Problems

1.

"*Once or twice, as a game, you took one of your books or Sri Aurobindo's and opened a page at random, and read out a sentence. Can these sentences give one a sign or an indication? What should we do to get a true answer?*

Everybody can do it. It is done in this way: you concentrate. Now, it depends on what you want. If you have an inner problem and want the solution, you concentrate on this problem; if you want to know the condition you are in, which you are not aware of—if you want to get some light on the state you are in, you just come forward with simplicity and ask for the light. Or else, quite simply, if you are curious to know what the invisible knowledge has to tell you, you remain silent and still for a moment and then open the book. I always used to recommend taking a paper-knife, because it is thinner; while you are concentrated you insert it in the book and with the tip indicate something. Then, if you know how to concentrate, that is to say, if you really do it with an aspiration to have an answer, it always comes.

For, in books of this kind (*Mother shows* 'The Synthesis of Yoga'), books of revelation, there is always an accumulation of forces—at least of higher mental forces, and most often of spiritual forces of the highest knowledge.

Every book, on account of the words it contains, is like a small accumulator of these forces. People dont know this, for they don”t know how to make use of it, but it is so. In the same way, in every picture, photograph, there is an accumulation, a small accumulation representative of the force of the person whose picture it is, of his nature and, if he has powers, of his powers. Now, you, when you are sincere and have an aspiration, you emanate a certain vibration, the vibration of your aspiration which goes and meets the corresponding force in the book, and it is a higher consciousness which gives you the answer.” (CWM 8: 162–163)

2.

“Everything is contained potentially. Each element of a whole potentially contains what is in the whole. It is a little difficult to explain, but you will understand with an example: when people want to practise magic, if they have a bit of nail or hair, it is enough for them, because within this, potentially, there is all that is in the being itself. And in a book there is potentially—not expressed, not manifest—the knowledge which is in the person who wrote the book. Thus, Sri Aurobindo represented a totality of comprehension and knowledge and power; and every one of his books is at once a symbol and a representation. Every one of his books contains symbolically, potentially, what is in him. Therefore, if you concentrate on the book,

you can, through the book, go back to the source. And even, by passing through the book, you will be able to receive much more than what is just in the book.

There is always a way of reading and understanding what one reads, which gives an answer to what you want. It is not just a chance or an amusement, nor is it a kind of diversion. You may do it just 'like that', and then nothing at all happens to you, you have no reply and it is not interesting. But if you do it seriously, if seriously your aspiration tries to concentrate on this instrument—it is like a battery, isn't it, which contains energies—if it tries to come into contact with the energy which is there and insists on having the answer to what it wants to know, well, naturally, the energy which is there—the union of the two forces, the force given out by you and that accumulated in the book—will guide your hand and your paper-knife or whatever you have; it will guide you exactly to the thing that expresses what you ought to know.... Obviously, if one does it without sincerity or conviction, nothing at all happens. If it is done sincerely, one gets an answer." (CWM 8: 163)

L—Concentration on the Idea

1.

"If one concentrates on a thought or a word, one has to dwell on the essential idea contained in the word with the aspiration to feel the thing which it expresses." (CWSA 29: 305)

2.

"As for instance in the method of Vedantic knowledge one concentrates on the idea of Brahman omnipresent—one looks at a tree or other surrounding objects with the idea that Brahman is there and the tree or object is only a form. After a time if the concentration is of the right kind, one begins to become aware of a presence, an existence, the physical tree form becomes a shell and that presence or existence is felt to be the only reality. The idea then drops, it is a direct vision of the thing that takes its place—there is no longer any necessity of concentrating on the idea, one sees with a deeper consciousness, *sa paśyati*. It should be noted that this concentration on the idea is not mere thinking, *mananam*—it is an inner dwelling on the essence of the Idea." (CWSA 29: 305–306)

3.

"Moreover for getting samadhi they [*Yogis of the traditional schools*] concentrate on one single idea and what they reach is that which is represented by that idea—

the samadhi is in its nature an exclusive concentration on that." (CWSA 29: 412)

4.

"This concentration proceeds by the Idea, using thought, form and name as keys which yield up to the concentrating mind the Truth that lies concealed behind all thought, form and name; for it is through the Idea that the mental being rises beyond all expression to that which is expressed, to that of which the Idea itself is only the instrument. By concentration upon the Idea the mental existence which at present we are breaks open the barrier of our mentality and arrives at the state of consciousness, the state of being, the state of power of conscious-being and bliss of conscious-being to which the Idea corresponds and of which it is the symbol, movement and rhythm. Concentration by the Idea is, then, only a means, a key to open to us the superconscient planes of our existence; a certain self-gathered state of our whole existence lifted into that superconscient truth, unity and infinity of self-aware, self-blissful existence is the aim and culmination; and that is the meaning we shall give to the term Samadhi." (CWSA 23: 321–322)

5.

"... but a more strenuous method is the fixing of the whole mind in concentration on the essence of the idea only, so

as to reach not the thought-knowledge or the psychological experience of the subject, but the very essence of the thing behind the idea. In this process thought ceases and passes into the absorbed or ecstatic contemplation of the object or by a merging into it in an inner Samadhi." (CWSA 23: 323)

6.

"We had a good laugh, for it was amusing. But it is quite true, it is an excellent method to practise. Naturally, instead of taking a drawing or any object, you may take, for instance, an idea, a few words. You have a problem preoccupying you, you don't know the solution of the problem; well, you objectify your problem in your mind, put it in the most precise, exact, succinct terms possible, and then concentrate, make an effort; you concentrate only on the words, and if possible on the idea they represent, that is, upon your problem—you concentrate, concentrate, concentrate until nothing else exists but that. And it is true that, all of a sudden, you have the feeling of something opening, and one is on the other side. The other side of what?... It means that you have opened a door of your consciousness, and instantaneously you have the solution of your problem.

It is an excellent method of learning 'how' to identify oneself." (CWM 5: 218–219)

7.

"If you concentrate on any idea with sufficient obstinacy, you will 'go through', as the occultists say, and behind the idea upon which you concentrate, you will find the light. But this is a bit risky.

This means that he who is capable of this kind of concentration will see the light.

Surely. That, surely. If one is capable of this kind of concentration, it is very good, but one must know upon what to concentrate. That is the important point." (CWM 4: 345)

8.

"By dwelling on an idea, by tapas on it, we can create not only the image of that idea in our minds, but its form in emotion, its truth in quality of character, its experience in terms of inner being. By dwelling with the will on the idea of courage or virtue it has been found that we can create courage or virtue in ourselves where they were formerly wanting. By brooding on an object with the will in mind in a state of masterful concentration it has been found that we can command the knowledge we need about the object. But the Indian theory of concentration goes farther & asserts that even events, things, objects can be controlled by this inner Tapas & brought about or reduced

to subjection without any ostensible material means. This concentration in mind is the manma of the Vedic rishis. The concentration may be on the object or idea itself or on the name of the object or on some form of words which expresses the idea. But even when the concentration is on idea or object & not on name or word, there is still, in all mental concentration, a silent or half expressed word or *vák* by which the idea or object is brought before mind." (CWSA 16: 725)

LI—Concentration to Relieve Pain

1.

"You are in pain, in great pain; it is hurting very much, you are suffering a lot.

First point: do not stress the pain by telling yourself, 'Oh, how painful! Oh, this pain is unbearable! Oh, it is becoming worse and worse, I shall never be able to bear it', etc., all this sort of thing. The more you go on thinking like this and feeling like this and the more your attention is concentrated on it, the pain increases amazingly.

So, the first point: to control yourself sufficiently not to do that.

Second point: as I said, it depends on your habits. If you know how to concentrate, to be quiet, and if you can bring into yourself a certain peace, of any kind—it may be a mental peace, it may be a vital peace, it may be a psychic peace; they have different values and qualities, this is an individual question —you try to realise within yourself a state of peace or attempt to enter into a conscious contact with a force of peace.... Suppose you succeed more or less completely. Then, if you can draw the peace into yourself and bring it down into the solar plexus—for we are not talking of inner states but of your physical body—and from there direct it very calmly, very slowly I might say, but very persistently, towards the place where the pain is more or less sharp, and fix it there, this is very good.

This is not always enough.

But if by widening this movement you can add a sort of mental formation with a little life in it—not just cold, but with a little life in it—that the only reality is the divine Reality, and all the cells of this body are a more or less deformed expression of this divine Reality—there is only one Reality, the Divine, and our body is a more or less deformed expression of this sole Reality—if by my aspiration, my concentration, I can bring into the cells of the body the consciousness of this *sole* Reality, all disorder must necessarily cease.

If you can add to that a movement of complete and trusting surrender to the Grace, then I am sure that within five minutes your suffering will disappear. If you know how to do it.

You may try and yet not succeed. But you must know how to try again and again and again, until you do succeed. But if you do those three things at the same time, well, there is no pain which can resist." (CWM 8: 212–213)

2.

"There is no outer means. Sciatica is a thing which yields only to inner concentrated force or else it goes away of itself and comes of itself. Outer means at best can only be palliatives." (CWSA 31: 589)

3.

"But obviously, without going so far, there is one thing that one can try to do: it is not to concentrate on one's pain, to turn the attention away as much as possible, not think at all of one's pain, think as little as possible and above all not be concentrated on it, not to pay attention …" (CWM 7: 129)

4.

"But you have the occasion, all the time, the opportunity to do it: you get a cut, get a knock, you see, one always gets a little hurt somewhere—especially when doing athletics, gymnastics and all that—well, these are opportunities given to us. Instead of sitting there observing the pain, trying to analyse it, concentrating upon it, which makes it increase indefinitely... There are people who think of something else but it does not last; they think of something else and then suddenly are drawn back to the place that hurts. But if one can do this... You see, since the pain is there, it proves that you are in contact with the nerve that's transmitting the pain, otherwise you wouldn't feel it. Well, once you know that you are in contact, you try to accumulate at that point as much immobility as you can, to stop the vibration of the pain; you will perceive then that it has the effect of a limb which goes to sleep when you are in an awkward position and that all of a sudden... you know, don't you?... and then, when it stops, it begins

to vibrate again terribly. Well, you deliberately try this kind of concentration of immobility in the painful nerve; at the painful point you bring as total an immobility as you can. Well, you will see that it works, as I told you, like an anaesthetic: it puts the thing to sleep. And then, if you can add to that a kind of inner peace and a trust that the pain will go away, well, I tell you that it will go." (CWM 6: 407–408)

LII—Concentration and Sleep

1.

"The gap made by the night and waking with the ordinary consciousness is the case with everybody almost (of course, the 'ordinary' consciousness differs according to the progress); but it is no use waiting to be conscious in sleep; you have to get the habit of getting back the thread of the progress as soon as may be and for that there must be some concentration after rising.

At night, you have to pass into sleep in the concentration—you must be able to concentrate with the eyes closed, lying down and the concentration must deepen into sleep—that is to say, sleep must become a concentrated going inside away from the outer waking state. If you find it necessary to sit for a time you may do so, but afterwards lie down, keeping the concentration till this happens." (CWSA 31: 450–451)

2.

"You have to start [*becoming conscious in sleep*] by concentrating before you sleep always with a specific will or aspiration. The will or aspiration may take time to reach the subconscient, but if it is sincere, strong and steady, it does reach after a time—so that an automatic consciousness and will are established in the sleep itself which will do what is necessary." (CWSA 31: 451)

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.

"Mother, what is sleep? Is it only the need of the body to rest or is it something else?

Sleep can be a very active means of concentration and inner knowledge. Sleep is the school one has to go through, if one knows how to learn his lesson there, so that the inner being may be independent of the physical form, conscious in itself and master of its own life. There are entire parts of the being which need this immobility and semi-consciousness of the outer being, of the body, in order to be able to live their own life, independently." (CWM 7: 70)

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." (CWM 7: 123–124)

6.

"You need not meditate at once [*after waking in the morning*]—but for a few minutes take a concentrated attitude calling the Mother's presence for the day." (CWSA 31: 451)

7.

"For example, you have a dream in the subtle physical, that is to say, quite close to the physical. Generally, these dreams occur in the early hours of the morning, that is between four and five o'clock, at the end of the sleep. If you do not make a sudden movement when you wake up, if you remain very quiet, very still and a little attentive—quietly attentive—and concentrated, you will remember them, for the communication between the subtle physical and the physical is established— very rarely is there no communication." (CWM 5: 36)

8.

"But if at the time of waking up you are not in a hurry, you are not obliged to leave your bed, on the contrary you can remain there as long as you wish, you need not even open your eyes; you keep your head exactly where it was and you make yourself like a tranquil mirror within and concentrate there. You catch just a tiny end of the tail of your dream. You catch it and start pulling gently, without stirring in the least. You begin pulling quite gently, and

then first one part comes, a little later another. You go backward; the last comes up first. Everything goes backward, slowly, and suddenly the whole dream reappears: ‘Ah, there! it was like that.’ Above all, do not jump up, do not stir; you repeat the dream to yourself several times—once, twice—until it becomes clear in all its details. Once that dream is settled, you continue not to stir, you try to go further in, and suddenly you catch the tail of something else. It is more distant, more vague, but you can still seize it. And here also you hang on, get hold of it and pull, and you see that everything changes and you enter another world; all of a sudden you have an extraordinary adventure—it is another dream.” (CWM 5: 37–38)

LIII—Concentration and Rejection

1.

"That is a known fact that everything comes from outside, from universal Nature. But the individual is not bound to accept everything that comes; he can accept and he can reject. The rejection may not succeed at once, if there is a strong habit of past acceptance; but if it is steadily persisted in, the rejection will succeed in the end.

What you should do, is always to reject the lower experiences and concentrate on a fixed and quiet aspiration towards the one thing needed, the Light, the Calm, the Peace, the Devotion that you felt for two or three days. It is because you get interested in the lower vital experiences and in observing and thinking about them that they take hold, and then comes the absence of the Contact and the confusion. You have surely had enough of this kind of experience already and should make up your mind to steadily reject it when it comes." (CWSA 29: 65)

2.

"The defects should be noticed and rejected, but the concentration should be positive—on what you are to be, i.e., on the development of the new consciousness rather than on this negative side." (CWSA 31: 700)

3.

"It is necessary to observe and know the wrong movements in you; for they are the source of your trouble and have to be
persistently rejected if you are to be free.
But do not be always thinking of your defects and wrong movements. Concentrate more upon what you are to be, on the ideal, with the faith that, since it is the goal before you, it must and will come." (CWSA 31: 701)

4.

"People get too much worried about these [*sex*-] dreams which are only mechanical movements of the subconscient physical. If the conscious vital is cleared, they will after some time, with a little concentration, dwindle away." (CWSA 31: 529)

LIV—Concentration in Listening to Music

1.

"*Sweet Mother,*
How can one enter into the feelings of a piece of music played by someone else?

In the same way that 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 latter process that we adopt when we listen to music with an intense and concentrated attention, to the point of stopping 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 captured, experienced, re-felt as if they were produced in ourselves." (CWM 16: 230) (CWM 12: 239)

2.

"But the best way of listening is this. It is to be like a still mirror and very concentrated, very silent. In fact, we see people who truly love music... I have seen musicians listening to music, musicians, composers or players who truly love music, I have seen them listening to music... they sit completely still, you know, they are like that, they do

not move at all. Everything, everything is like that. And if one can stop thinking, then it is very good, then one profits fully.... It is one of the methods of inner opening and one of the most powerful." (CWM 6: 382)

3.

"Indian music, when there are good musicians, has almost always a psychic origin; for example, the *rāgas* have a psychic origin, they come from the psychic. The inspiration does not often come from above. But Indian music is very rarely embodied in a strong vital. It has rather an inner and intimate origin. I have heard a great deal of Indian music, a great deal; I have rarely heard Indian music having vital strength, very rarely; perhaps not more than four or five times. But very often I have heard Indian music having a psychic origin, it translates itself almost directly into the physical. And truly one must then concentrate, and as it is—how to put it?—very tenuous, very subtle, as there are none of those intense vital vibrations, one can easily glide within it and climb back to the psychic origin of the music. It has that effect upon you, it is a kind of ecstatic trance, as from an intoxication. It makes you enter a little into trance. Then if you listen well and let yourself go, you move on and glide, glide into a psychic consciousness. But if you remain only in the external consciousness, the music is so tenuous that there is no response from the vital, it leaves you altogether flat. Sometimes, there was a vital force,

then it became quite good.... I myself like this music very much, this kind of theme developing into a play. The theme is essentially very musical: and then it is developed with variations, innumerable variations, and it is always the same theme which is developed in one way or another." (CWM 5: 76–77)

4.

"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)

LV—Concentration on Control over One's Body

1.

"Very few people understand this, and generally those who are against this outer discipline of sports, this concentration on the material realisation, are people who *completely* lack control over their physical being. And to realise the integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo the control of one's body is a first *indispensable* step. Those who despise physical activities are people who won't be able to take a single step on the true path of integral yoga, unless they first get rid of their contempt. Control of the body in all its forms is an indispensable basis. A body which dominates you is an enemy, it is a disorder you cannot accept. It is the enlightened will in the mind which should govern the body, and not the body which should impose its law on the mind. When one knows that a thing is bad, one must be capable of not doing it. When one wants something to be realised, one must be able to do it and not be stopped at every step by the body's inability or ill-will or lack of collaboration; and for that one must follow a physical discipline and become master in one's own home.

It is very fine to escape into meditation and from the height of one's so-called grandeur look down on material things, but one who is not master in his own home is a slave." (CWM 9: 82–83)

LVI—Concentration and Ignorance

1.

"... Ignorance can only come about as a subordinate phenomenon by some concentration of consciousness absorbed in a part knowledge or a part action of the being and excluding the rest from its awareness. There may be either a concentration of the One in itself to the exclusion of the Many or of the Many in their own action to the exclusion of the all-awareness of the One, or of the individual being in himself to the exclusion both of the One and the rest of the Many who are then to him separated units not included in his direct awareness." (CWSA 22: 602)

2.

"Ignorance is therefore not the natural character of the consciousness of the soul, even of the individual soul; it is the outcome of some particularising action in the executive Conscious-Force when it is absorbed in its works and forgetful of self and of the total reality of the nature. This action cannot be that of the whole being or of the whole force of being,—for the character of that completeness is whole consciousness and not partial consciousness,—it must be a superficial or partial movement absorbed in a superficial or partial action of the consciousness and the energy, concentrated in its formation, oblivious of all else that is not included in the formation or not there overtly

operative. Ignorance is Nature's purposeful oblivion of the Self and the All, leaving them aside, putting them behind herself in order to do solely what she has to do in some outer play of existence." (CWSA 22: 603)

3.

"That purpose for which all this exclusive concentration we call the Ignorance is necessary, is to trace the cycle of self-oblivion and self-discovery for the joy of which the Ignorance is assumed in Nature by the secret spirit. It is not that all cosmic manifestation would otherwise become impossible; but it would be a quite different manifestation from the one in which we live; it would be confined to the higher worlds of the divine Existence or to a typal non-evolving cosmos where each being lived in the whole light of its own law of nature, and this obverse manifestation, this evolving cycle, would be impossible. What is here the goal would be then the eternal condition; what is here a stage would be the perpetuated type of existence. It is to find himself in the apparent opposites of his being and his nature that Sachchidananda descends into the material Nescience and puts on its phenomenal ignorance as a superficial mask in which he hides himself from his own conscious energy, leaving it self-forgetful ..." (CWSA 22: 612)

4.

"This Ignorance is, as we have seen, really a power of the Knowledge to limit itself, to concentrate itself on the work in hand, an exclusive concentration in practice which does not prevent the full existence and working of the whole conscious being behind, but a working in the conditions chosen and self-imposed on the nature. All conscious self-limitation is a power for its special purpose, not a weakness; all concentration is a force of conscious being, not a disability. It is true that while the Supermind is capable of an integral, comprehensive, multiple, infinite self concentration, this is dividing and limited; it is true also that it creates perverse as well as partial and, in so far, false or only half true values of things: but we have seen the object of the limitation and of this partiality of knowledge; and the object being admitted, the power to fulfil it must be admitted also in the absolute force of the absolute Being. This power of self-limitation for a particular working, instead of being incompatible with the absolute conscious-force of that Being, is precisely one of the powers we should expect to exist among the manifold energies of the Infinite." (CWSA 22: 616)

5.

"It is to be noted also that in order to remove the veil of the Ignorance the conscious Force of being in us uses a reverse action of its power of exclusive concentration; it

quiets the frontal movement of Prakriti in the individual consciousness and concentrates exclusively on the concealed inner being,—on the Self or on the true inner, psychic or mental or vital being, the Purusha,—to disclose it. But when it has done so, it need not remain in this opposite exclusiveness; it can resume its integral consciousness or a global consciousness which includes both being of Purusha and action of Prakriti, the soul and its instruments, the Self and the dynamisms of the Self-Power, *ātmaśakti*: it can then embrace its manifestation with a larger consciousness free from the previous limitation, free from the results of Nature's forgetfulness of the indwelling Spirit. Or it may quiet the whole working it has manifested, concentrate on a higher level of Self and Nature, raise the being to it and bring down the powers of the higher level to transform the previous manifestation: all that is so transformed is still included, but as a part of the higher dynamism and its higher values, in a new and greater self-creation. This is what can happen when the Consciousness-Force in our being decides to raise its evolution from the mental to the supramental level. In each case it is Tapas that is effective, but it acts in a different manner according to the thing that has to be done, according to the predetermined process, dynamism, self-deploying of the Infinite." (CWSA 22: 615)

6.

"The Absolute is not really limited by putting forth in itself a cosmos of relations; it is the natural play of its absolute being, consciousness, force, self-delight. The Infinite is not limited by building up in itself an infinite series of interplaying finite phenomena; rather that is its natural self-expression. The One is not limited by its capacity for multiplicity in which it enjoys variously its own being; rather that is part of the true description of an infinite as opposed to a rigid, finite and conceptual unity. So too the Ignorance, considered as a power of manifoldly self absorbed and self-limiting concentration of the conscious being, is a natural capacity of variation in his self-conscious knowledge, one of the possible poises of relation of the Absolute in its manifestation, of the Infinite in its series of finite workings, of the One in its self-enjoyment in the Many. The power by self-absorption to become unaware of the world which yet at the same time continues in the being, is one extreme of this capacity of consciousness; the power by absorption in the cosmic workings to become ignorant of the self which all the time is carrying on those workings, is the reverse extreme. But neither really limits the integral self-aware existence of Sachchidananda which is superior to these apparent oppositions; even in their opposition they help to express and manifest the Ineffable." (CWSA 22: 616–617)

LVII—Areas Where Concentration Helps

1. Concentration to bring Divine Influence down into the head and as far as the heart

"Your mind and psychic being are concentrated on the spiritual aim and open to the Divine—that is why the Influence comes down into the head and as far as the heart. But the vital being and nature and the physical consciousness are under the influence of the lower nature. As long as the vital and physical being are not surrendered or do not on their own account call for the higher life, this struggle is likely to continue.

Surrender everything, reject all other desires or interests, call on the divine Shakti to open the vital nature and bring down calm, peace, light, Ananda into all the centres. Aspire, await with faith and patience the result. All depends on a complete sincerity and an integral consecration and aspiration.

The world will trouble you so long as any part of you belongs to the world. It is only if you belong entirely to the Divine that you can become free." (CWSA 29: 76)

2. Concentrate for inner reversal of consciousness

"Well, there is a moment when it comes up with so much concentration and such intensity that with this intensity of

concentration suddenly there occurs a reversal [inner reversal of consciousness], and then, instead of being on this side you are on that side, and when you are on that side everything is very simple; you understand, you know, you are, you live, and then you see clearly the unreality of the rest, and this is enough." (CWM 7: 193)

3. To get back the psychic contact, concentrate and aspire

"Once the psychic has come to the front, can it withdraw again?

Yes. Generally one has a series of experiences of identification, very intense at first, which later gradually diminish, and then one day you find that they have disappeared. Still you must not be disturbed, for it is quite a common phenomenon. But next time—the second time—the contact is more easily obtained. And then comes a moment, which is not very far off, when as soon as one concentrates and aspires, one gets a contact. One may not have the power of keeping it all the time, but can get it at will. Then, from that moment things become very easy. When one feels a difficulty or there is a problem to be solved, when one wants to make progress or there is just a depression to conquer or an obstacle to be overcome or else simply for the joy of identification (for it is an

experience that gives a very concrete joy; at the moment of identification one truly feels a very, very great joy), then, at any moment whatever, one may pause, concentrate for a while and aspire, and quite naturally the contact is established and all problems which were to be solved are solved. Simply to concentrate—to sit down and concentrate—to aspire in this way, and the contact is made, so to say, instantaneously." (CWM 6: 33)

4. Concentration to control the mind, vital and physical

"When the will and energy are concentrated and used to control the mind, vital and physical and change them or to bring down the higher consciousness or for any other Yogic purpose or high purpose, that is called Tapasya." (CWSA 29: 81)

5. Concentration to deal with adverse powers

"The forces that stand in the way of sadhana are the forces of the lower mental, vital and physical nature. Behind them are adverse powers of the mental, vital and subtle physical worlds. These can be dealt with only after the mind and heart have become one-pointed and concentrated in the single aspiration to the Divine." (CWSA 29: 150)

6. Concentration to speak usefully

"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 [beginner] 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)

7. Concentration to calm the vital

"*How can I calm the vital so as to sleep better? By aspiration?*
And a concentration, a will to reject the restlessness." (CWM 17: 47)

8. The stillness of the mind is prepared by the process of concentration

"The stillness of the mind is prepared by the process of concentration." (CWSA 12: 24)

9. The process of knowing things by identification is based on the power of concentration

"In theory, it is true that *everything can be known by identification*, but in practice it is rather difficult to apply. The whole process is based on the power of concentration. One has to concentrate on the object to be known (in this case the roof) until all the rest of the world disappears and the object alone exists; then, by a slight movement of will, one can succeed at identification. But it is not very easy to do and there are other means of knowing besides reasoning—intuition, for example—which are also effective." (CWM 16: 44)

10. Concentrate to get help from books

"To read my books is not difficult because they are written in the simplest language, almost the spoken language. To get help from them, it is enough to read with attention and concentration and an attitude of inner good-will, with a desire to receive and live what is taught." (CWM 16: 231)

11. Concentration to develop one's thought

"*Sweet Mother,*
You have said that I do not think well. How can one develop one's thought?

You must read with much attention and concentration, not novels or dramas, but books that make you think. You must meditate on what you have read, reflect on a thought until you have understood it. Talk little, remain quiet and concentrated, and speak only when it is indispensable." (CWM 16: 242) (CWM 12: 141–142)

12. Concentration before sleeping helps in remaining in contact with the Divine force

"*Sweet Mother,*
I have noticed one thing: When I sit for a few minutes and make an effort to concentrate before going to sleep, the next day I wake up quite early and am quite fresh. I concentrate on the tiny luminous tip of an incense-stick. But how is it that I wake up early because of that? There is no relation between these two things!

On the contrary, there is a very concrete relation. When you concentrate before sleeping, then in your sleep you remain in contact with the Divine force; but when you fall

heavily to sleep without any preliminary concentration, you sink into the inconscient and the sleep is more tiring than restful, and it is difficult to come out of this sluggishness." (CWM 16: 264–265)

13. Concentration to increase willpower

"*Sweet Mother,*
How can one increase single-mindedness and willpower? They are so necessary for doing anything.

Through regular, persevering, obstinate, unflagging exercise—I mean exercise of concentration and will." (CWM 16: 316)

14. Concentration to see lights of higher consciousness (seeing lights can be put in a separate category because it is an outcome and not an aim)

"The lights one sees in concentration are the lights of various powers or beings or forces and often lights that come down from the higher consciousness.

The violet light is that of the Divine Compassion (*karuṇā*— Grace)—the white light is the light of the Mother (the Divine Consciousness) in which all others are

contained and from which they can be manifested." (CWSA 30: 123)

"The golden light is always the light of the higher Truth (Supermind, Overmind or a little lower down the pure Intuition) and it is represented as a great luminous expanse on the summits of the being. *X* by concentrating on the light entered into contact with the higher reaches and that always gives these results, peace, joy, strength, a consciousness secure in the power of the Divine. It is of course through the psychic that she got into this contact, but in itself it is more an experience of the higher spiritual consciousness above mind than a psychic experience." (CWSA 30: 153)

15. Concentration to develop the faculty of supraphysical vision

"This faculty of sensing supraphysical things internally or externalising them, so to speak, so that they become visible, audible, sensible to the outward eye, ear, even touch, just as are gross physical objects, this power or gift is not a freak or an abnormality; it is a universal faculty present in all human beings, but latent in most, in some rarely or intermittently active, occurring as if by accident in others, frequent or normally active in a few. But just as anyone can with some training learn science and do things

which would have seemed miracles to his forefathers, so almost anyone, if he wants, can with a little concentration and training develop the faculty of supraphysical vision." (CWSA 30: 89)

16. Method of concentration used by the yogis to develop powers

"The Yogis in India very often in order to develop the power use the method of *trāṭak*, concentrating the vision on a single point or object—preferably a luminous object. Your looking at the star was precisely an exercise in *trāṭak* and had the effect which any Yogi in India would have told you is normal. For all this is not fancy or delusion; it is part of an occult science which has been practised throughout the historic and prehistoric ages in all countries and it has always been known to be not merely auto-suggestive or hallucinatory in its results, but, if one can get the key, veridical and verifiable." (CWSA 30: 90)

"This gazing on a flame or a bright spot is the traditional means used by Yogis for concentration or for awakening of the inner consciousness and vision. You seem to have gone by the gazing into a kind of surface (not deep) trance, which is indeed one of its first results, and begun to see things probably on the vital plane. I do not know what were the 'dreadful objects' you saw but that dreadfulness is the

character of many things first seen on that plane, especially when crossing its threshold by such means. You should not employ these means, I think, for they are quite unnecessary and besides, they may lead to a passive concentration in which one is open to all sorts of things and cannot choose the right ones." (CWSA 30: 108)

17. One's concentration must call forth the major experiences

"All the parts of the consciousness are like fields into which forces from the same planes of consciousness in the universal Nature are constantly entering or passing. The best thing is to observe without getting affected in either way or without attaching too much importance—for these are minor experiences and one's concentration must call the major ones." (CWSA 30: 107)

18. Concentration to get rid of anger

"In fact, one should always do this, when he feels that he is caught by an impulse of some kind or other, particularly impulses of anger. If one takes as an absolute discipline, instead of acting or speaking (because speech is an action), instead of acting under the impulse, if one withdraws and then does as I said, one sits down quietly, concentrates and then looks at his anger quietly, one

writes it down, when one has finished writing, it is gone—in any case, most often." (CWM 7: 106)

19. Concentrate to escape from other people's influence

"Sweet Mother, how can we escape from other people's influence?

By concentrating more and more totally and completely on the Divine. If you aspire with all your ardour, if you want to receive only the divine influence, if all the time you pull back towards yourself what is taken, caught by other influences and with your will put it under the divine influence, you succeed in doing it. It's a work that can't be done in a day, in a minute; you must be vigilant for a very long time, for years; but one can succeed.
First of all you must will it.
For all things, first you must understand, will, and then begin to practise—begin by just a very little." (CWM 7: 241)

20. Concentration to absorb universal forces

"I don't think that forces have a limit, because in comparison with us they are certainly unlimited. But it's our capacity of reception that is limited. We cannot absorb them beyond a certain measure, and then we must keep a

balance between the expenditure and the capacity to receive. If one spends suddenly in a kind of impulse—for example, in an impulsive movement—if one spends much more than one has received, one needs a brief moment of concentration, calm, receptivity to absorb universal forces. You must put yourself in a certain condition to receive them; and then, they last for a certain time, and once you have spent them you must begin again to receive them. It is in this sense that there are limits. It isn't the forces that are limited, it is the receptivity." (CWM 7: 138)

21. Concentrate to find the real cause of certain movements and feelings

"One has all that is necessary. And so what must be acquired is the power of observation and the capacity for concentrating and for pursuing a little continuously a certain movement in one's being; as when you have some very strong feeling which takes hold of you, seizes you, then you must look at it, so to say, and concentrate upon it and manage to find out where it comes from, what has brought you this. Just this work of concentrating in order to succeed in finding this out is enough to lead you straight to an experience. And then if, for example, you want to do something practical, if in your feelings you are completely upset, agitated, if there's a kind of storm within, then by concentrating you can try to find out the cause of all that,

you see, the inner cause, the real cause, and at the same time you can aspire to bring peace, quietude, a kind of inner immobility into your feelings, because without that you can't see clearly. When everything is in a whirlwind one sees nothing; as when you are in a great tempest and the wind is blowing from all sides and there are clouds of dust, you cannot see; it is the same thing. To be able to see, all must become quiet. So you must aspire and then draw into this storm... draw peace, quietude, immobility, like this; and then if you succeed it is still another experience, it is the beginning.

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." (CWM 7: 78–79)

22. Concentration to get rid of unpleasant thoughts

"Mother, at times unpleasant thoughts come and disturb us. How can we get rid of them?

There are several methods. Generally—but it depends on people—generally, the easiest way is to think of something else. That is, to concentrate one's attention upon something that has nothing to do with that thought, has no connection with that thought, like reading or some work—generally something creative, some creative work. For instance, those who write, while they are writing (let us take simply a novelist), while he is writing, all other thoughts are gone, for he is concentrated on what he is doing. When he finishes writing, if he has no control, the other thoughts will return. But precisely when a thought assails you, one can try to do some creative work; for example, the scientist could do some research work, a special study to discover something, something that is very absorbing; that is the easiest way." (CWM 6: 22)

23. Concentrate the force on the defects caused by bad habits of the body to make them disappear

"For example, there are bad habits of the body, in the sense that the body is in the habit of upsetting its balance—we call that falling ill, you know; but still, the functioning becomes defective through a bad habit. You manage by concentrating the Force and applying it on this defect, to make it disappear but it doesn't disappear completely, it enters the subconscient. And then, when you

are off your guard, when you stop paying attention properly and preventing it from showing itself, it rises up and comes out." (CWM 7: 142)

24. Concentrate and insert a marker in a book, and you will get the answer to what you need

"*Why do we sometimes have a special preference for a certain chapter, for instance, the one on sincerity or aspiration?*

You mean the desire to read it? Because one probably needs what is in it! If you have an attraction for something, usually it is that you need to read it, and it is exactly the thing you need to understand which comes to you. You can use this even with an altogether material method which I have often given you. See, you concentrate—if you have a difficulty or want to be helped, you concentrate and then insert a marker in a book and you alight upon the thing which is the answer to what you have asked. That is the most material means; but if the mind is well disposed, then, quite naturally, when it reads the titles, it will say, 'Oh, this is what I want to read', without even knowing what is within, because it will feel that this is what has to be read to answer its question or its need." (CWM 6: 175)

25. In the most concentrated condition, this tendency of inertia goes out of the nature

"A certain inertia, tendency to sleep, indolence, unwillingness or inability to be strong for work or spiritual effort for long at a time, is in the nature of the human physical consciousness. When one goes down into the physical for its change (that has been the general condition here for a long time), this tends to increase. Even sometimes when the pressure of the sadhana on the physical increases or when one has to go much inside, this temporarily increases—the body either needing more rest or turning the inward movement into a tendency to sleep or be at rest. You need not, however, be anxious about that. After a time this rights itself; the physical consciousness gets the true peace and calm in the cells and feels at rest even in full work or in the most concentrated condition and this tendency of inertia goes out of the nature." (CWSA 31: 372)

26. To get rid of bad thoughts, write with concentration

"And there is something more interesting still: if you have a bad thought that annoys and disturbs you, write it down very attentively, very carefully, putting as much consciousness and will as you can. Then take the piece of

paper and, with concentration, tear it up with the will that the thought will be torn up in the same way. That is how you will get rid of it." (CWM 15: 309–310)

27. If you feel tired and fatigued after hearing about people's personal difficulties, it can be overcome with a little concentration while calling the Mother

"*Mother,*

I get very tired when people come to me in connection with their personal difficulties. I feel the fatigue when they are gone. I call you and recover in about 5 to 10 minutes. Yesterday X came to me after a long time and narrated all her family affairs. I was full of life but as soon as she left I felt completely run down. My whole body was dead tired and even after 24 hours I have not recovered.

Yes—it is because she takes without giving anything. But a little concentration while calling me and it will be over." (CWM 17: 318)

28. When one part of the being progresses, it wants you to concentrate

"People think they have only to continue doing for ever what they were doing or at least remain in the same state

of consciousness, day after day do their little work, and all will go well. But it is not like that. Suddenly, for some reason or other, one part of the being—either your feelings or your thoughts or your vital—makes progress, has discovered something, received a light, progressed. It takes a leap in progress. All the rest remains behind. This brings about a disequilibrium. That is enough to make you very tired. But in fact, it is not tiredness: it is something which makes you want to keep quiet, to concentrate, remain within yourself, be like that, and build up slowly a new harmony among the different parts of the being. And it is very necessary to have, at a given moment, a sort of rest, for an assimilation of what one has learnt and a harmonisation of the different parts of the being." (CWM 6: 35–36)

29. It is by the concentration of our will and the intensity of our aspiration that we can hasten the day of victory

" '*Grant that we may effectuate Thy Victory' if the time has come... but it is for You to answer, O Sweet Mother*.

It is by the concentration of our will and the intensity of our aspiration that we can hasten the day of victory." (CWM 16: 23)

30. Concentrate on somebody or something to become consciously identified with it

" *'Knowledge can only come by conscious identity, for that is the only true knowledge,—existence aware of itself.'*
Sri Aurobindo *The Life Divine*

There is always some kind of *unconscious identification* with the surrounding people and things; but by will and practice one can learn to concentrate on somebody or something and to get consciously identified with this person or this thing, and through this identification you know the nature of the person or the thing." (CWM 14: 50–51)

31. As soon as one feels a wave of physical disequilibrium, of ill health coming, well, to concentrate in the right spirit is to concentrate in an inner calm, a trust in the divine Grace, and a will to remain in physical equilibrium and good health

" *What is 'the right spirit'?*

It depends on the case, my child. The right spirit is the will to perfect oneself, or the will to be calm, or... it depends, you see, depends on the circumstances. That is why he has

not stated it precisely, in this way or that; it means that in each circumstance there is a spirit which is the suitable spirit, the one you ought to have, the attitude you must inwardly take. It depends on the case.

For example, you see, as soon as one feels a wave of physical disequilibrium, of ill health coming, well, to concentrate in the right spirit is to concentrate in an inner calm, a trust in the divine Grace, and a will to remain in physical equilibrium and good health. This is the right spirit. In another case, one may feel a wave of anger or a fit of temper coming from outside; then one should withdraw into an inner calm, a detachment from superficial things, with a will to express only what comes from above and always be submissive to the divine Will. This is the right spirit. And in each case it is something like that. Naturally it always comes back to the same thing, that one must remember the Divine and put oneself at His service and will what He wills." (CWM 6: 340)

32. Concentrating on the weak spot in one's envelope to get cured

"There are people who lead quite an ordinary life, who know how to sleep as one should, eat as one should, and their nervous envelope is so intact that they pass through all dangers as though unconcerned. It is a capacity one can cultivate in oneself. If one becomes aware of the weak spot

in one's envelope, a few minutes' concentration, a call to the force, an inner peace is sufficient for it to be all right, get cured, and for the untoward thing to vanish." (CWM 4: 63)

33. Concentrating with love helps the departed soul

"… as for instance when a person is much loved by others who are yet alive; if at that moment these people who love him concentrate their thought and love on the departed one, he finds a refuge therein, and this protects him completely against those entities; but one who passes away without anyone's having a special attachment for him, either because he is surrounded by people he has harmed and who do not love him or by people who are in a terribly unconscious state—he is like a prey delivered to these forces. And that indeed is an experience that's difficult to bear. They cannot touch anything else except what belongs to their own domain, that is, the most material vital—the higher vital escapes them altogether, they can do nothing there. … But behind all this is the psychic being which nothing can touch, which is above all possible attacks, and it indeed is free to go where it wants. … it goes to rest in the psychic worlds. There it enters into a kind of beatific contemplation in which it remains, and this is an assimilation of all its experiences, and when it has

finished assimilating them and resting, well, it starts preparing to come down again for a new life." (CWM 6: 55–56)

34. The sun is the symbol of the concentrated light of Truth

"The sun is the symbol of the concentrated light of Truth." (CWSA 30: 142)

LVIII—The Intensity of Yoga's Concentration Overcomes the Delay in Radical Transformation

1.

"Nature is striving towards this new manifestation. But her ways are tortuous and her march is uncertain, full of halts and regressions, so much so that it is difficult to perceive her true plan. However, it is becoming more and more clear that she wants to bring forth a new species out of the human species, a supramental race that will be to man what man is to the animal. But the advent of this transformation, this creation of a new race which Nature would take centuries of groping attempts to bring about, can be effected by the intelligent will of man, not only in a much shorter time but also with much less waste and loss.

Here the integral Yoga has its rightful place and utility. For Yoga is meant to overcome, by the intensity of its concentration and effort, the delay that time imposes on all radical transformation, on all new creation." (CWM 12: 98)

LIX—According to the Concentration of the Consciousness, Destiny Can Change

1.

"To solve the problem one must know that, to begin with, all living creatures, and more especially human beings, are made up of a combination of several entities that come together, interpenetrate, sometimes organising themselves and completing each other, sometimes opposing and contradicting one another. Each one of these beings or states of being belongs to a world of its own and carries within it its own destiny, its own determinism. And it is the combination of all these determinisms, which is sometimes very heterogeneous, that results in the destiny of the individual. But as the organisation and relationship of all these entities can be altered by personal discipline and effort of will, as these various determinisms act on each other in different ways according to the concentration of the consciousness, their combination is nearly always variable and therefore unforeseeable.

For example, the physical or material destiny of a being comes from his paternal and maternal forebears, from the physical conditions and circumstances in which he is born; one should be able to foresee the events of his physical life, his state of health and approximately how long his body will last. But then there comes into play the formation of his vital being (the being of desires and

passions, but also of impulsive energy and active will) which brings with it its own destiny. This destiny affects the physical destiny and can alter it completely and often even change it for the worse. For example, if a man born with a very good physical balance, who ought to live in very good health, is driven by his vital to all kinds of excesses, bad habits and even vices, he can in this way partly destroy his good physical destiny and lose the harmony of health and strength which would have been his but for this unfortunate interference. This is only one example. But the problem is much more complex, for, to the physical and vital destinies, there must be added the mental destiny, the psychic destiny, and many others besides." (CWM 12: 77–78)

2.

"We come now to the most terrible battle of all, the physical battle which is fought in the body; for it goes on without respite or truce. It begins at birth and can end only with the defeat of one of the two combatants: the force of transformation and the force of disintegration. I say at birth, for in fact the two movements are in conflict from the very moment one comes into the world, although the conflict becomes conscious and deliberate only much later. For every indisposition, every illness, every malformation, even accidents, are the result of the action of the force of disintegration, just as growth, harmonious development,

resistance to attack, recovery from illness, every return to the normal functioning, every progressive improvement, are due to the action of the force of transformation. Later on, with the development of the consciousness, when the fight becomes deliberate, it changes into a frantic race between the two opposite and rival movements, a race to see which one will reach its goal first, transformation or death. This means a ceaseless effort, a constant concentration to call down the regenerating force and to increase the receptivity of the cells to this force, to fight step by step, from point to point against the devastating action of the forces of destruction and decline, to tear out of its grasp everything that is capable of responding to the ascending urge, to enlighten, purify and stabilise. It is an obscure and obstinate struggle, most often without any apparent result or any external sign of the partial victories that have been won and are ever uncertain—for the work that has been done always seems to need to be redone; each step forward is most often made at the cost of a setback elsewhere and what has been done one day can be undone the next. Indeed, the victory can be sure and lasting only when it is total. And all that takes time, much time, and the years pass by inexorably, increasing the strength of the adverse forces." (CWM 12: 86–87)

LX—In Concentration, in the Intensity of the Will Lies the Origin of Joy

1.

"For example, a man sits down to write a book, he makes an effort which sets vibrating something in his brain to attract ideas; well, suddenly, this man experiences joy. It is quite certain that, whatever you do, even the most material work, like sweeping a room or cooking, if you make the necessary effort to do this work to the maximum of your ability, you will feel joy, even if what you do is against your nature. When you want to realise something, you make quite spontaneously the necessary effort; this concentrates your energies on the thing to be realised and that gives a meaning to your life. This compels you to a sort of organisation of yourself, a sort of concentration of your energies, because it is this that you wish to do and not fifty other things which contradict it. And it is in this concentration, this intensity of the will, that lies the origin of joy. This gives you the power to receive energies in exchange for those you spend." (CWM 4: 33)

LXI—Concentration on Darshan Days

1.

"In the days when Sri Aurobindo used to give Darshan, before he gave it there was always a concentration of certain forces or of a certain realisation which he wanted to give to people. And so each Darshan marked a stage forward; each time something was added. But that was at a time when the number of visitors was very limited. It was organised in another way, and it was part of the necessary preparation.

But this special concentration, now, occurs at other times, not particularly on Darshan days. And it occurs much more often, on other kinds of occasions, in other circumstances. The movement is much accelerated, the march forward, the stages succeed each other much more rapidly. And perhaps it is more difficult to follow; or in any case, if one doesn't take care to keep up, one is much more quickly out-distanced than before; one gets the feeling of being late or of being abandoned. Things change quickly.

And I ought to say that these Darshan times with all this rush of people serve not so much for an inner progress—that is to say, inside the Ashram—as for a diffusion outside. The use we make of these days is a little different; above all, it is to go farther, have a vaster field, reach more distant points. But the concentration is less and there is this inconvenience of a large crowd, which was

always there but which has been much greater during these last years than at the beginning. At the beginning there was not such a crowd; and perhaps the quality of the crowd was also a little different." (CWM 8: 262–263)

LXII—The Result of the Concentration Is Not Usually Immediate

1.

"The result of the concentration is not usually immediate—though to some there comes a swift and sudden outflowering; but with most there is a time longer or shorter of adaptation or preparation, especially if the nature has not been prepared already to some extent by aspiration and tapasya. The coming of the result can sometimes be aided by associating with the concentration one of the processes of the old Yogas. There is the Adwaita process of the way of knowledge—one rejects from oneself the identification with the mind, vital, body, saying continually "I am not the mind", "I am not the vital", "I am not the body", seeing these things as separate from one's real self—and after a time one feels all the mental, vital, physical processes and the very sense of mind, vital, body becoming externalised, an outer action, while within and detached from them there grows the sense of a separate self-existent being which opens into the realisation of the cosmic and transcendent Spirit. There is also the method—a very powerful method—of the Sankhyas, the separation of the Purusha and the Prakriti. One enforces on the mind the position of the Witness—all action of mind, vital, physical becomes an outer play which is not myself or mine, but belongs to Nature and has been enforced on an

outer me. I am the witness Purusha who am silent, detached, not bound by any of these things. There grows up in consequence a division in the being; the sadhak feels within him the growth of a calm silent separate consciousness which feels itself quite apart from the surface play of the mind and the vital and physical Nature. Usually when this takes place, it is possible very rapidly to bring down the peace of the higher consciousness and the action of the higher Force and the full march of the Yoga. But often the Force itself comes down first in response to the concentration and call and then, if these things are necessary, it does them and uses any other means or process that is helpful or indispensable.

One thing more. In this process of the descent from above and the working it is most important not to rely entirely on oneself, but to rely on the guidance of the Guru and to refer all that happens to his judgment and arbitration and decision. For it often happens that the forces of the lower nature are stimulated and excited by the descent and want to mix with it and turn it to their profit. It often happens too that some Power or Powers undivine in their nature present themselves as the Supreme Lord or as the Divine Mother and claim the being's service and surrender. If these things are accepted, there will be an extremely disastrous consequence. If indeed there is the assent of the sadhak to the Divine

working alone and the submission or surrender to that guidance, then all can go smoothly." (CWSA 30: 328–329)

2.

"It should be noted that the result of the Yogic processes is not, except in rare cases, immediate and one must apply them with patience till they give a result which is sometimes long in coming if there is much resistance in the outer nature.

How can you fix the mind on the higher Self so long as you have no consciousness or experience of it? You can only concentrate on the idea of the Self. Or else one can concentrate on the idea of the Divine or the Divine Mother or on an image or on the feeling of devotion, calling the presence in the heart or the Force to work in the mind and heart and body and liberate the consciousness and give the self-realisation. If you concentrate on the idea of the Self, it must be with the conception of the Self as something different from mind and its thoughts, the vital and its feelings, the body and its actions—something standing back from all these, something that you can come to feel concretely as an Existence or Consciousness, separate from all that yet freely pervading all without being involved in these things." (CWSA 29: 304)

LXIII—Difficulties While Concentrating

1.

"*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." (CWM 6: 309)

2.

"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." (CWM 6: 309–310)

3.

"But for instance, when undesirable thoughts come, if you look at them, observe them, if you take pleasure in following them in their movements, they will never stop

coming. It is the same thing when you have undesirable feelings or sensations: if you pay attention to them, concentrate on them or even look at them with a certain indulgence, they will never stop. But if you absolutely refuse to receive and express them, after some time they stop. You must be patient and very persistent." (CWM 6: 330)

4.

"For you know—you have been told, told repeatedly, it has been dinned into your ears—you know that you have a divine consciousness within you, and you can sleep night after night and play day after day and learn day after day, and not have the enthusiasm and intense will to enter into contact with yourself, yes, with yourself, here within!...(Mother points to the centre of her chest.) This, this indeed, is beyond me!

The first time I knew—and nobody told me this, I knew it by experience—the first time I knew that there was a discovery to make within me, well, that was *the most important* thing. This had to be put before everything. And when I found, as I said, a book, a man, just to give me a little indication, to tell me, 'Here you are. If you do this the path will open before you', why, I rushed headlong like a... like a cyclone, and nothing could have stopped me.

And how many years you have been here, half asleep! You think about it, of course, from time to time,

especially when I speak to you about it; at times when you read. But that ardour, that will which conquers all obstacles, that concentration which overcomes *everything*!" (CWM 6: 299–300)

5.

"*Isn't the aspiration, the contemplation of which you speak, inconsistent with outer activity?*

No, if there is a contradiction, it is that the concentration is not done in the right way. Indeed the world is in this state of falsehood in which one cannot concentrate within oneself on the divine Presence without losing contact with the external being. I do not say that it is very easy, I have given you this as a somewhat far ideal, but it is quite possible and it has been done, I may assure you, and it takes away nothing from the capacity of not breaking one's neck while running!" (CWM 4: 123)

6.

"If you want to cure yourself of a defect or a difficulty, there is but one method: to be perfectly vigilant, to have a very alert and vigilant consciousness. First you must see very clearly what you want to do. … Hence, first, you must know exactly what you want—know, not mentally, but through concentration, through aspiration and a very conscious will. That is the important point. Afterwards,

gradually, by observation, by a sustained vigilance, you must realise a sort of method which will be personal to you—it is useless to convince others to adopt the same method as yours, for that won't succeed. Everyone must find his own method, everyone must have his own method, and to the extent you put into practice your method, it will become clearer and clearer, more and more precise. You can correct a certain point, make clear another, etc. So, you start working.... For a while, all will go well. Then, one day, you will find yourself facing an insurmountable difficulty and will tell yourself, 'I have done all that and look, everything is as bad as before!' Then, in this case, you must, through a yet more sustained concentration, open an inner door in you and bring into this movement a force which was not there formerly, a state of consciousness which was not there before. And there, there will be a power, when your own personal power will be exhausted and no longer effective. When the personal power runs out ordinary people say, 'That's good, I can no longer do anything, it is finished.' But I tell you that when you find yourself before this wall, it is the beginning of something new. By an obstinate concentration, you must pass over to the other side of the wall and there you will find a new knowledge, a new force, a new power, a new help, and you will be able to work out a new system, a new method which surely will take you very far.

I do not say this to discourage you; only, things happen like that. And the worst of all is to get discouraged when it happens. You must tell yourself, 'With the means of transport at my disposal I have reached a certain point, but these means do not allow me to go further. What should I do?... Sit there and not stir any longer?—not at all. I must find other means of transport.' This will happen quite often, but after a while you will get used to it. You must sit down for a moment, meditate, and then find other means. You must increase your concentration, your aspiration and your trust and with the new help which comes to you, make a new programme, work out other means to replace those you have left behind. This is how one progresses stage by stage." (CWM 4: 180–181)

7.

"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)

8.

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

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

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

9.

"If one can manage to realise that, to... how to put it?... visualise, picture the little person one is, in the little earth where one is, and the tiny second of consciousness which for the moment is hurting you or is unpleasant for you, just this—which in itself is only a second in your existence, and that you yourself have been many things before and will be many more things afterwards, that what affects you now you will have probably completely forgotten in ten years, or if you remember it you will say, 'How did I happen to attach any importance to that?'... if you can realise that first and then realise your little person which is a second in eternity, not even a second, you know, imperceptible, a fragment of a second in eternity, that the whole world has unfolded before this and will unfold yet, indefinitely—before, behind—and that... well, then suddenly you sense the utter ridiculousness of the importance you attach to what happened to you.... *Truly* you feel... to what an extent it is absurd to attach any importance to one's life, to oneself, and to what happens to you. And in the space of three minutes, if you do this properly, all unpleasantness is swept away. Even a very deep pain can be swept away.

Simply a concentration like this, and to place oneself in infinity and eternity. Everything goes away. One comes out of it cleansed. One can get rid of *all* attachments and even, I say, of the deepest sorrows—of everything, in this way—if one knows how to do it in the right way. It immediately takes you out of your little ego. There we are." (CWM 6: 346)

10.

"*I could not concentrate properly. This shows that the game isn't very good for me.*

Obviously, playing before pranam cannot help your concentration." (CWM 17: 154)

LXIV—Constant Concentration Can Be Kept by a Divine Decision

1.

"*An experiment: This morning while supervising work, I prayed with concentration that each workman might become conscious that he was working for Mother and feel the joy of it. After concentrating like this for about an hour, I felt fatigued and imperceptibly the concentration frittered away. What is the cause of this feeling of fatigue? What is the difficulty in keeping such a concentration for all the 24 hours?*

The physical being is always fatigued when it is asked to keep a lasting concentration.

The concentration can be kept constantly but not by mental decision.

It must be a divine decision." (CWM 16: 24)

LXV—Make Concentrated Realisation So That Even a Catastrophic Storm May Not Destroy Hope of Future

1.

"This is the condition of the earth, and it is not very bright. But for us one possibility remains—I have spoken about it to you several times already—even if, outside, things are deteriorating completely and the catastrophe cannot possibly be avoided, there remains for us, I mean those for whom the supramental life is not a vain dream, those who have faith in its reality and the aspiration to realise it—I don't necessarily mean those who have gathered here in Pondicherry, in the Ashram, but those who have as a link between them the knowledge Sri Aurobindo has given and the will to live according to that knowledge—there remains for them the possibility of intensifying their aspiration, their will, their effort, to gather their energies together and shorten the time for the realisation. There remains for them the possibility of working this miracle—individually and to a small extent collectively—of conquering space, duration, the time needed for this realisation; of replacing time by intensity of effort and going fast enough and far enough in the realisation to liberate themselves from the consequences of the present condition of the world; of making such a concentration of force, strength, light, truth, that by this very realisation they can be above these

consequences and secure against them, enjoy the protection bestowed by the Light and Truth, by Purity—the divine Purity through the inner transformation—and that the storm may pass over the world without being able to destroy this great hope of the near future; that the tempest may not sweep away this beginning of realisation.

Instead of falling asleep in an easy quietude and letting things happen according to their own rhythm, if one strains to the utmost one's will, ardour, aspiration and springs up into the light, then one can hold one's head higher; one can have, in a higher region of consciousness, enough room to live, to breathe, to grow and develop above the passing cyclone.

This is possible. In a very small way, this was already done during the last war, when Sri Aurobindo was here. It can be done again. But one must want it and each one must do his own work as sincerely and completely as he can." (CWM 9: 170–171)

LXVI—Concentrated Activity to Bring Forth a Supramental Consciousness

1.

"There are, in the history of the earth, moments of transition when things that have existed for thousands of years must give way to those that are about to manifest. A special concentration of the world consciousness, one might almost say, an intensification of its effort, occurs at such times, varying according to the kind of progress to be made, the quality of the transformation to be realised. We are at precisely such a turning-point in the world's history. Just as Nature has already created upon earth a mental being, man, so too there is now a concentrated activity in this mentality to bring forth a supramental consciousness and individuality." (CWM 12: 72)

2.

"This was certainly what he expected of us, what he conceived of as the superman who must be the intermediate being between humanity as it is and the supramental being *created* in the supramental way, that is, no longer belonging to animality at all and delivered from all animal needs.

As we are, we have been created in the ordinary animal way, and therefore, even if we transform ourselves, there will remain something of this animal origin. The

supramental being as he conceived of it, is not formed in the ordinary animal way *at all* but directly, through a process that for the moment still seems occult to us, but is a direct handling of forces and substance in such a way that the body can be a 'materialisation' and not a formation according to the ordinary animal principle.

It is quite obvious that intermediate beings are necessary, that it is these intermediate beings who must find the means of creating beings of the supermind, and, undoubtedly, when Sri Aurobindo wrote this he was convinced that this is what we must do.

I think—I know—that it is now certain that we shall realise what he expects of us. It has become no longer a hope but a certainty. Only the time necessary for this realisation will be longer or shorter according to our individual effort, our concentration, our goodwill... and the we give to this fact. For the inattentive observer things may appear very much what they were before, but for one who knows how to see and is not deceived by appearances things are going well.

Let each one do his best and perhaps not many years will have to elapse before the first visible results become apparent to all." (CWM 9: 191–192)

3.

"Traditions—which of course are only oral traditions and from the scientific point of view quite questionable, but

which are based on individual memories—say that the first man or the first human pair or the first human individuals were materialised in accordance with an occult method, something like the one Sri Aurobindo foretells for the future supramental process; that is, that beings belonging to higher worlds have, by a process of concentration and materialisation, built or formed for themselves bodies of physical matter. It probably wasn't the lower species which progressively produced a body which became the first human body.

According to spiritual and occult knowledge, consciousness precedes form; consciousness by self-concentration produces its form; whereas, according to the materialist idea, it is form which precedes consciousness and makes it possible for consciousness to manifest. For those who have some knowledge of the invisible worlds and a direct perception of the play of forces, there is no possible doubt: it is *necessarily* consciousness which produces a form in order to manifest. Now, the way things are arranged on earth, it is quite certainly a consciousness of a higher order which penetrates a form and helps to transform it, so that this form may become—either immediately or through successive generations—capable of manifesting that consciousness. For those who have the inner vision and knowledge, this is absolutely beyond doubt. It is impossible for it to be otherwise. But those who start from the other end, from below, will not admit it—but

all the same it is not for ignorance to dictate knowledge to wisdom! And yet, this is what it does at present. As it is easier to doubt than to know, the human mind is accustomed to doubt everything; that is its first movement, and of course that is why it knows nothing." (CWM 9: 237)

4.

"It seems—it is even certain—that the very substance which will constitute this intermediate world that is already being built up, is richer, more powerful, more luminous, more resistant, with certain subtler, more penetrating new qualities, and a kind of innate capacity of universality, as if its degree of subtlety and refinement allowed the perception of vibrations in a much wider, if not altogether total way, and it removes the sensation of division one has with the old substance, the ordinary mental substance. There is a subtlety of vibration which makes global, universal perception a spontaneous and natural thing. The sense of division, of separation, disappears quite naturally and spontaneously with that substance. And that substance is at present almost universally diffused in the earth atmosphere. It is perceptible in the waking state, simply with a little concentration and a kind of absorption of consciousness, if this is retracted, withdrawn from the ordinary externalisation which seems more and more artificial and false." (CWM 9: 314)

5.

"The descent of the supermind is a long process or at least a process with a long preparation and one can only say that the work is going on sometimes with a strong pressure for completion, sometimes retarded by the things that rise from below and have to be dealt with before farther progress can be made. The process is a (spiritual) evolutionary process concentrated into a brief period—it could be done otherwise (by what men would regard as a miraculous intervention) only if the human mind were more flexible and less attached to its ignorance than it is. As we envisage it, it must manifest in a few first and then spread, but it is not likely to sweep over the earth in a moment. It is not advisable to discuss too much what it will do and how it will do it, because these are things the Supermind itself will fix, acting out of that Divine Truth in it, and the mind must not try to fix for it grooves in which it will run." (CWSA 28: 287–288)

6.

"Sri Aurobindo had given me charge of the outer work because he wanted to withdraw into concentration in order to hasten the manifestation of the supramental consciousness and he had announced to the few people who were there that he was entrusting to me the work of helping and guiding them, that I would remain in contact

with him, naturally, and that through me he would do the work." (CWM 9: 148–149)

7.

"These things (events etc.) [*of past lives*] are not known usually unless they come in some concentrated state of vision of themselves. The Mother nowadays seldom has these states because the whole concentration is on bringing down the supramental principle here. When that work is done then these things may come." (CWSA 28: 552)

8.

"But if you want to unite with the supramental Force which wants to come down, you have the feeling of gathering all your aspiration and making it rise up in a vertical ascent to the higher forces which have to descend. It is just a question of movement, you see, it is a movement of widening or a movement of concentration and ascent." (CWM 7: 266)

LXVII—Centres Where the Energies Are Concentrated

1.

"*I did not understand this passage from the text: 'Continence is therefore the rule for all those who aspire for progress. But especially for those who want to prepare themselves for the supramental manifestation, this continence must be replaced by a total abstinence, achieved not by coercion and suppression but by a kind of inner alchemy, as a result of which the energies that are normally used in the act of procreation are transmuted into energies for progress and integral transformation.'*

This is quite well known in yogic disciplines in India, when one begins to become conscious of one's energies and have control over them. You know, don't you, the theory of the different 'centres' where the energies are concentrated? … Anyway, these centres are centres of accumulation of energy, energies which control certain activities. Thus, there is an accumulation of energy at the sex-centre, a great accumulation of energy, and those who have control over these energies succeed in mastering them and raising them up, and they place them here (*Mother points to the centre of the chest*). And here is the centre of the energies of progress. This is what is called the seat of *Agni*, but it is the energies of progress, the will

to progress, that are here. So the energies concentrated in the sex-centre are pulled upwards and placed here. And they increase considerably, so that the sex-centre becomes absolutely calm, peaceful, immobile." (CWM 6: 77)

2.

"For the moment, one can have a vision of the whole. For example, it is entirely certain that under the influence of the supramental light, the transformation of the body consciousness will take place first; then will follow a progress in the mastery and control of all the movements and functions of all the organs of the body; afterwards this mastery will change little by little into a sort of radical modification of the movement and then of the constitution of the organs themselves. All that is certain, although the perception of it is not precise enough. But what will finally take place—when the various organs have been replaced by centres of concentration of different forces, qualities and natures, each of which will act according to its own special mode—all this is still merely a conception and the body does not comprehend it very well, because it is still far from realisation and the body can truly comprehend only that which it is on the point of being able to do." (CWM 15: 281)

3.

"One can have the vision of the whole. For instance, it is quite certain that the transformation of the body-

consciousness will take place first, that a progress in the mastery and control of all the movements of the body will come next, that this mastery will gradually change (here it becomes more vague), gradually, into a sort of transformation of the movement itself: alteration and transformation—all that is certain. But what must happen in the end, what Sri Aurobindo has spoken about in one of his last articles ['The Divine Body', The Supramental Manifestation] in which he says that even the organs will be transformed, in the sense that they will be replaced by centres of concentration of forces (of concentration and action of forces) of different qualities and kinds which will replace all the organs of the body—that, my children, is much more distant, that is, it is something which... one cannot yet grasp the means of doing it. Take, for instance, the heart: by what means is this function of the heart which makes the blood flow through the whole body going to be replaced by a concentration of forces? By what means will the blood be replaced by a certain kind of force, and all the rest? By what means will the lungs be replaced by another concentration of forces, and what forces, and with what vibrations, and in what way?... All that will come much later. It cannot yet be realised. One can have an inkling of it, foresee it, but..." (CWM 6: 110–111)

4.

"Transformation implies that all this purely material arrangement is replaced by an arrangement of

concentrations of force having certain types of different vibrations substituting each organ by a centre of conscious energy moved by a conscious will and directed by a movement coming from above, from higher regions. No stomach, no heart any longer, no circulation, no lungs, no... All this disappears. But it is replaced by a whole set of vibrations representing what those organs are symbolically. For the organs are only the material symbols of centres of energy; they are not the essential reality; they simply give it a form or a support in certain given circumstances. The transformed body will then function through its *real* centres of energy and not any longer through their symbolic representatives such as were developed in the animal body. Therefore, first of all you must know what your heart represents in the cosmic energy and what the circulation represents and what the stomach and the brain represent. To begin with, you must first be conscious of all that. And then, you must have at your disposal the original vibrations of that which is symbolised by these organs. And you must slowly gather together all these energies in your body and change each organ into a centre of conscious energy which will replace the symbolic movement by the real one.... You believe it will take only three hundred years to do that? I believe it will take much more time to have a form with qualities which will not be exactly those we know, but will be much superior; a form that one naturally dreams to see plastic:

as the expression of your face changes with your feelings, so the body will change (not the form but within the same form) in accordance with what you want to express with your body. It can become very concentrated, very developed, very luminous, very quiet, with a perfect plasticity, with a perfect elasticity and then a lightness at will... Have you never dreamt of giving a kick to the ground and then soaring into the air, flying away? You move about." (CWM 5: 59)

5.

"There is no end to imagination: to be luminous whenever one wants it, to be transparent whenever one wants it. Naturally there is no longer any need of any bones also in the system; it is not a skeleton with skin and viscera, it is another thing. It is concentrated energy obeying the will. This does not mean that there will no longer be any definite and recognisable forms; the form will be built by qualities rather than by solid particles. It will be, if one may say so, a practical or pragmatic form; it will be supple, mobile, light at will, in contrast to the fixity of the gross material form. So, to change this into what I have just described, I believe three hundred years are truly very little. It seems many more than that are needed. Perhaps with a very, very, very concentrated work…" (CWM 5: 60)

LXVIII—The Concentrated Aspiration of Centuries Has Led You to the Ashram

1.

"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." (CWM 6: 271–272)

LXIX—A Perfect Equality of Soul Is a Concentrated Power

1.

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

Yes, the most important indication is a perfect equality of soul in all circumstances. It is an absolutely indispensable basis; something very quiet, calm, peaceful, the feeling of a great force. Not the quietness that comes from inertia but the sensation of a concentrated power which keeps you always steady, whatever happens, even in circumstances which may appear to you the most terrible in your life. That is the first sign." (CWM 4: 97–98)

LXX—The Power of Observation Is the Faculty of Concentration

1.

"In what part of the being does the power of observation develop?

I think the power of observation develops in all the parts of the being. You may have a mental power of observation, a vital power of observation, a physical power of observation. When you observe ideas, for instance, the train of ideas, the logic of the ideas, it is not altogether the same power of observation as when you look at a friend doing athletics and see whether he is making his movements correctly or not. That is, the capacity of attention is there in both cases, but it works in a different field. It can't be said that it is one part of the being observing the others; it is the faculty of observation developing in each part of the being—that is, the faculty of concentration and attention." (CWM 6: 8)

2.

"If one is very attentive, one becomes conscious. One must be very concentrated and very attentive, then one becomes conscious." (CWM 5: 387)

LXXI—Inspiration Comes in a State of Concentration

1.

"It is not effort that brought the inspiration. Inspiration comes from above in answer to a state of concentration which is itself a call to it. Effort on the contrary fatigues the consciousness and therefore is not favourable to the best work; the only thing is that sometimes—by no means always—effort culminates in a pull for the inspiration which brings some answer, but it is not usually so good and effective an inspiration as that which comes when there is the easy and intense concentration of the energy in its work.." (CWSA 29: 268)

2.

"What happened is a thing that often happens and—taking your account of it—it reproduced in your case the usual stages. First you sat down in prayer—that means a call to the Above, if I may so express it. Next came the necessary condition for the answer to the prayer to be effective—'little by little a sort of restfulness came', in other words, the quietude of the consciousness which is necessary before the Power that has to act can act. Then the rush of the Force or Power, 'a flood of energy and sense of power and glow' and the natural concentration of the being in inspiration and expression, the action of the Power. This is

the thing that used to happen daily to the physical workers in the Asram. Working with immense energy and enthusiasm, with a passion for the work they might after a time feel tired—then they would call the Mother and a sense of rest came into them and with or after it a flood of energy so that twice the amount of work could be done without the least fatigue or reaction." (CWSA 29: 267)

3.

"Your will must continue to act steadily, not in the way of choosing a particular action or demanding a particular object, but as an ardent aspiration concentrated upon the end to be achieved. This is the first step. If you are vigilant, if your attention is alert, you will certainly receive something in the form of an inspiration of what is to be done and that you must forthwith proceed to do." (CWM 3: 19)

LXXII—Fall of the Concentration Has Not to Be Taken as Something Tragic

1.

"Fall of the concentration happens to everybody—it has not to be taken as if it were something tragic or allowed to be the cause of depression." (CWSA 30: 66)

2.

"One can concentrate on the different centres; but sometimes one concentrates for so long, with so much effort, and has no result. And then one day something shakes you, you feel that you are going to lose your footing, you have to cling on to something; then you cling within yourself to the idea of union with the Divine, the idea of the divine Presence, the idea of the transformation of the consciousness, and you aspire, you want, you try to organise your feelings, movements, impulses around this. And it comes.

Some people have recommended all kinds of methods; probably these were methods which had succeeded in their case; but to tell the truth, one must find one's own method, it is only after having done the thing that one knows how it should be done, not before." (CWM 7: 208–209)

3.

"It happens to most sadhaks that in particular parts of the day they feel concentrated and get results, and in others

that condition is not there. This is especially in the earlier stages of the progress. It is only after the higher consciousness, peace etc. have settled in the being that one can usually be at all times in the active condition of sadhana.” (CWSA 30: 68)

LXXIII—Acquire Greater Capacities by Other Means than Concentrating in Only One Area

1.

"Concentration on a single thing in order to attain one's aim is very necessary for the human mind in its normal functioning, but one can arrive at a different working that's more complete, more subtle. Naturally, physically one is bound to be limited, for in physical life one depends a great deal on time and space, and also it is difficult to realise great things without special concentration. But if one wants to lead a higher and deeper life, I believe one can acquire perhaps much greater capacities by other means than those of restriction and limitation. There is a considerable advantage in getting rid of one's limits, if not from the point of view of realisation in action, at least from that of spiritual realisation." (CWM 6: 20)

2.

"But, Sweet Mother, at school it is not possible to take many subjects. We have to specialise.

Yes, yes! I have heard that, especially from your teachers. I don't agree. And I know it very well, this is being continuously repeated to me: if anything is to be done properly, one must specialise. It is the same thing for sports also. It is the same for everything in life. It is said

and repeated, and there are people who will prove it: to do something well one must specialise. One must do that and concentrate. If one wants to become a good philosopher, one must learn only philosophy, if one wants to be a good chemist, one must learn chemistry only. And if one wants to become a good tennis-player, one must play only tennis. That's not what I think, that is all I can say. My experience is different. I believe there are general faculties and that it is much more important to acquire these than to specialise—unless, naturally, it be like M. and Mme. Curie who wanted to develop a certain science, find something new, then of course they were compelled to concentrate on that science. But still that was only till they had discovered it; once they had found it, nothing stopped them from widening their mind." (CWM 6: 18)

3.

"*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)

4.

"*May the Divine Mother give me the necessary force so that the following prayer of mine may become effective.*

As a son of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, my greatest interest is in Truth. Let not the mountain of pride hidden in Nature distort in any way the movements of this Truth—the Glorious Sun. Lift me above smallness.

Do not let the view of the part hide the perception of the whole, and the details of one step obstruct the concentration on the Goal.
Blessings." (CWM 14: 230)

5.

"For distrust and disobedience are like falsehood (they are themselves a falsity, based on false ideas and impulses),—they interfere in the action of the Power, prevent it from being felt or working fully and diminish the force of the Protection. It was the same thing that made you lose touch for a while—for the adverse vital Formation always makes use of these wrong movements to cloud the consciousness. Not only in your inward concentration, but in your outward acts and movements you must take the right attitude. If you do that and put everything under the Mother's guidance, you will find that difficulties begin to diminish or are much more easily got over and things become steadily smoother.

Now that these things have happened you should learn from them and feel the necessity of being, as you say, conscious in your work. In your work and acts you

must do the same as in your concentration. Open to the Mother, put them under her guidance, call in the peace, the supporting Power, the protection and, in order that they may work, reject all wrong influences that might come in their way by creating wrong, careless or unconscious movements." (CWSA 32: 318–319)

LXXIV—Making Yourself Empty Is Not to Have Any Concentration

1.

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

LXXV—Exclusive Concentration Has to Be Abandoned by a Seeker of the Integral Fulfilment

1.

"The difficulty of the Task has led naturally to the pursuit of easy and trenchant solutions; it has generated and fixed deeply the tendency of religions and schools of Yoga to separate the life of the world from the inner life. ... There appears at once the antinomy of a bright and pure kingdom of God and a dark and impure kingdom of the devil; we feel the opposition of our crawling earthly birth and life to an exalted spiritual God-consciousness; we become readily convinced of the incompatibility of life's subjection to Maya with the soul's concentration in pure Brahman existence. The easiest way is to turn away from all that belongs to the one and to retreat by a naked and precipitous ascent into the other. Thus arises the attraction and, it would seem, the necessity of the principle of exclusive concentration which plays so prominent a part in the specialised schools of Yoga; for by that concentration we can arrive through an uncompromising renunciation of the world at an entire self-consecration to the One on whom we concentrate. It is no longer incumbent on us to compel all the lower activities to the difficult recognition of a new and higher spiritualised life and train them to be its agents or executive powers. It is enough to kill or quiet them and keep at most the few energies necessary, on one side, for

the maintenance of the body and, on the other, for communion with the Divine." (CWSA 23: 73)

2.

"He is indifferent to the play of the emotions, deaf to the hunger-call of passion, closed to the activities of Life,—the more blessed he, the sooner they fall away from him and leave him free, still and mute, the eternal non-doer. The body is his stumbling-block, the vital functions are his enemies; if their demands can be reduced to a minimum, that is his great good fortune. 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. To be alone with oneself or alone with the Divine, to walk apart with God and his devotees, to entrench oneself in the single self-ward endeavour of the mind or Godward passion of the heart is the trend of these Yogas. The problem is solved by the excision of all but the one central difficulty which pursues the one chosen motive-force; into the midst of the dividing calls of our nature the principle of an exclusive concentration comes sovereignly to our rescue." (CWSA 23: 77)

3.

"The traditional systems, whatever their other differences, all proceed on the belief or the perception that the Eternal and Absolute can only be or at least can only inhabit a pure transcendent state of non-cosmic existence or else a non-existence. All cosmic existence or all that we call existence is a state of ignorance. Even the highest individual perfection, even the most blissful cosmic condition is no better than a supreme ignorance. All that is individual, all that is cosmic has to be austerely renounced by the seeker of the absolute Truth. The supreme quiescent Self or else the absolute Nihil is the sole Truth, the only object of spiritual knowledge. The state of knowledge, the consciousness other than this temporal that we must attain is Nirvana, an extinction of ego, a cessation of all mental, vital and physical activities, of all activities whatsoever, a supreme illumined quiescence, the pure bliss of an impersonal tranquillity self-absorbed and ineffable. The means are meditation, a concentration excluding all things else, a total loss of the mind in its object. Action is permissible only in the first stages of the search in order to purify the seeker and make him morally and temperamentally a fit vessel for the knowledge. Even this action must either be confined to the performance of the rites of worship and the prescribed duties of life rigorously ordained by the Hindu Shastra or, as in the Buddhistic discipline, must be guided along the eightfold path to the

supreme practice of the works of compassion which lead towards the practical annihilation of self in the good of others. In the end, in any severe and pure Jnanayoga, all works must be abandoned for an entire quiescence." (CWSA 23: 287–288)

4.

"Nor is the seeker of the integral fulfilment permitted to solve too arbitrarily even the conflict of his own inner members. He has to harmonise deliberate knowledge with unquestioning faith; he must conciliate the gentle soul of love with the formidable need of power; the passivity of the soul that lives content in transcendent calm has to be fused with the activity of the divine helper and the divine warrior. To him as to all seekers of the spirit there are offered for solution the oppositions of the reason, the clinging hold of the senses, the perturbations of the heart, the ambush of the desires, the clog of the physical body; but he has to deal in another fashion with their mutual and internal conflicts and their hindrance to his aim, for he must arrive at an infinitely more difficult perfection in the handling of all this rebel matter. Accepting them as instruments for the divine realisation and manifestation, he has to convert their jangling discords, to enlighten their thick darknesses, to transfigure them separately and all together, harmonising them in themselves and with each other,—integrally, omitting no grain or strand or vibration,

leaving no iota of imperfection anywhere. An exclusive concentration, or even a succession of concentrations of that kind, can be in his complex work only a temporary convenience; it has to be abandoned as soon as its utility is over. An all-inclusive concentration is the difficult achievement towards which he must labour." (CWSA 23: 78)

5.

"It is obvious, since mind-consciousness is the sole waking state possessed by mental being, that it cannot ordinarily quite enter into another without leaving behind completely both all our waking existence and all our inward mind. This is the necessity of the Yogic trance. But one cannot continually remain in this trance; or, even if one could persist in it for an indefinitely long period, it is always likely to be broken in upon by any strong or persistent call on the bodily life. And when one returns to the mental consciousness, one is back again in the lower being. Therefore it has been said that complete liberation from the human birth, complete ascension from the life of the mental being is impossible until the body and the bodily life are finally cast off. The ideal upheld before the Yogin who follows this method is to renounce all desire and every least velleity of the human life, of the mental existence, to detach himself utterly from the world and, entering more and more frequently and more and more deeply into the

most concentrated state of Samadhi, finally to leave the body while in that utter in-gathering of the being so that it may depart into the supreme Existence. It is also by reason of this apparent incompatibility of mind and Spirit that so many religions and systems are led to condemn the world and look forward only to a heaven beyond or else a void Nirvana or supreme featureless self-existence in the Supreme." (CWSA 23: 395–396)

6.

"To proceed farther towards that Transcendence by concentration of one's own being upon it is to lose mental existence and world-existence altogether and cast oneself into the Unknowable.

The integral Yoga of knowledge demands instead a divine return upon world-existence and its first step must be to realise the Self as the All, *sarvaṁ brahma*. First, concentrating on the Self-existent, we have to realise all of which the mind and senses are aware as a figure of things existing in this pure Self that we now are to our own consciousness. This vision of the pure self translates itself to the mind-sense and the mind perception as an infinite Reality in which all exists merely as name and form, not precisely unreal, not a hallucination or a dream, but still only a creation of the consciousness, perceptual and subtly sensible rather than substantial. In this poise of the consciousness all seems to be, if not a dream, yet very

much like a representation or puppet-show taking place in the calm, motionless, peaceful, indifferent Self." (CWSA 23: 401)

7.

"But neither is mind as a whole, even spiritualised, able to change it; spirituality liberates and illumines the inner being, it helps mind to communicate with what is higher than itself, to escape even from itself, it can purify and uplift by the inner influence the outward nature of individual human beings: but so long as it has to work in the human mass through mind as the instrument, it can exercise an influence on the earth-life but not bring about a transformation of that life. For this reason there has been a prevalent tendency in the spiritual mind to be satisfied with such an influence and in the main to seek fulfilment in other-life elsewhere or to abandon altogether any outward-going endeavour and concentrate solely on an individual spiritual salvation or perfection. A higher instrumental dynamis than mind is needed to transform totally a nature created by the Ignorance." (CWSA 22: 918–919)

LXXVI—Excessive Seclusion Has a Spiritual Disadvantage

1.

"It is good that you have decided to concentrate on the true object of your coming here, but while absorption in mental work and social contacts is not favourable for Yoga, excessive seclusion has also its spiritual disadvantage. An inner concentration supported by a limitation of external contacts is sufficient. Some kind of activity and service to the Divine is also a very necessary element in the integral spiritual life." (CWSA 29: 380)

2.

"I think there is still a misunderstanding in your mind about the demands of the Yoga. The Divine does *not* demand a complete solitude, aloof and lonely—it is only a few whose nature needs such concentration within to find themselves who have to do that and even for them a complete segregation is not likely to be helpful except perhaps for a time. All that is necessary is a total turning of the life to the Divine and it can be done by degrees without too much forcing of the nature. Literature, poetry, music can be as much a part of Yoga as anything else." (CWSA 29: 381)

3.

"It is not our experience that by meditation alone it is possible to change the nature, nor has retirement from

outward activity and work much profited those who have tried it; in many cases it has been harmful. A certain amount of concentration, an inner aspiration in the heart and an opening of the consciousness to the Mother's presence there and to the descent from above are needed. But without action, without work the nature does not really change; it is there and by contact with men that there is the test of the change in the nature. As for the work one does, there is no higher or lower work; all work is the same provided it is offered to the Mother and done for her and in her power." (CWSA 32: 252)

4.

"The impulse to retire comes from some push to concentrate within—but the cause of the push varies in different cases. There are certain cases in which there was a desire to isolate oneself from the Mother's influence (Pranam, meditation etc.) and follow one's own fancies, e.g.*X*, *Y*, also perhaps with a sense of superiority = 'no need of these things for so great a Yogi as I'. In other cases there was a marked desire for isolation, but that was where the brain was already upset (*Z*) or a wrong influence at work (*A*). But others have simply desired concentration or wished not to spend themselves in externalisation (*B*, *C* in their periods of retirement). So all cannot come under one sentence." (CWSA 31: 340)

5.

"That is why, also, people who wanted the easiest path went into solitude to sit under a tree, did not speak any more and saw nobody; for this helps to diminish undesirable exchanges. Only, it has been noticed that these people begin to become enormously interested in the life of little animals, the life of plants, for it is difficult not to have any exchange with anything at all. So it is much better to face the problem squarely and be surrounded by an atmosphere so totally concentrated on the Divine that what comes through this atmosphere is filtered in its passage." (CWM 6: 213)

6.

"The six years of which you speak have been spent by you mainly in struggling with sex and doubt and vital difficulties —many take more than that time about it. What I have been wanting you to do now is to get the right positive attitude within at the centre free from these things. Its basis must be what I have said, 'I want the Divine and the Divine only; since I want and need, I shall surely arrive, however long it takes, and till I do, I shall persist and endure with patience and courage.' I do not mean by that that you should have no activity but prayer and concentration; few can do that; but whatever is done should be done in that spirit." (CWSA 31: 730)

LXXVII—Rajayogic Concentration

1.

"In the science of Rajayoga after the heart has been stilled and the mind prepared, the next step is to subjugate the body by means of *asan* or the fixed and motionless seat. The aim of this fixity is twofold, first the stillness of the body and secondly the forgetfulness of the body. When one can sit still and utterly forget the body for a long period of time, then the asan is said to have been mastered. In ordinary concentration when the body is only comparatively still it is not noticed, but there is an under current of physical consciousness which may surge up at any moment into the upper current of thought and disturb it. The Yogin seeks to make the forgetfulness perfect. In the higher processes of concentration this forgetfulness reaches such a point that the bodily consciousness is annulled and in the acme of the *samadhi* a man can be cut or burned without being aware of the physical suffering. Even before the concentration is begun the forgetfulness acquired is sufficient to prevent any intrusion upon the mind except under a more than ordinarily powerful physical stimulus. After this point has been reached the Yoga proceeds to the processes of pranayam by which the whole system is cleared of impurities and the *pranasakti*, the great cosmic energy which lies behind all processes of Nature, fills the body and the brain and becomes sufficient

for any work of which man is actually or potentially capable. This is followed by concentration. The first process is to withdraw the senses into the mind. This is partly done in the ordinary process of absorption of which every thinking man is capable. To concentrate upon the work in hand whether it be a manual process, a train of thought, a scientific experiment or a train of inspiration, is the first condition of complete capacity and it is the process by which mankind has been preparing itself for Yoga. To concentrate means to be absorbed; but absorption may be more or less complete. When it is so complete that for all practical purposes the knowledge of outward things ceases, then the first step has been taken towards Yogic absorption. We need not go into the stages of that absorption rising from pratyahar to samadhi and from the lower samadhi to the higher. The principle is to intensify absorption. It is intensified in quality by the entire cessation of outward knowledge, the senses are withdrawn into the mind, the mind into the buddhi or supermind, the supermind into Knowledge, Vijnana, Mahat, out of which all things proceed and in which all things exist. It is intensified in quantity or content; instead of absorption in a set of thoughts or a train of intuitions, the Yogin concentrates his absorption on a single thought, a single image, a single piece of knowledge, and it is his experience that whatever he thus concentrates on, he masters,—he becomes its lord and does with it what he wills. By

knowledge he attains to mastery of the world. The final goal of Rajayoga is the annulment of separate consciousness and complete communion with that which alone is whether we call Him Parabrahman or Parameshwara, …" (CWSA 12: 24–25)

2.

"The concentration of thought is used by the Rajayogins to gain freedom and control over the workings of mind, just as the processes of governed respiration and fixed posture are used by the Hathayogins to gain freedom and control over the workings of the body and the vital functions." (CWSA 13: 445)

3.

"This use of concentration implies like every other a previous purification; it implies also in the end a renunciation, a cessation and lastly an ascent into the absolute and transcendent state of Samadhi from which if it culminates, if it endures, there is, except perhaps for one soul out of many thousands, no return. For by that we go to the "supreme state of the Eternal whence souls revert not" into the cyclic action of Nature; and it is into this Samadhi that the Yogin who aims at release from the world seeks to pass away at the time of leaving his body. We see this succession in the discipline of the Rajayoga. For first the Rajayogin must arrive at a certain moral and spiritual

purity; he must get rid of the lower or downward activities of his mind, but afterwards he must stop all its activities and concentrate himself in the one idea that leads from activity to the quiescence of status. The Rajayogic concentration has several stages, that in which the object is seized, that in which it is held, that in which the mind is lost in the status which the object represents or to which the concentration leads, and only the last is termed Samadhi in the Rajayoga although the word is capable, as in the Gita, of a much wider sense. 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. In all Yoga there are indeed many preparatory objects of thought-concentration, forms, verbal formulas of thought, significant names, all of which are supports to the mind in this movement, all of which have to be used and transcended; the highest support according to the Upanishads is the mystic syllable AUM, whose three letters represent the Brahman or Supreme Self in its three degrees of status, the Waking Soul, the Dream Soul and the Sleep Soul, and the whole potent sound rises towards that which is beyond status as beyond activity. For of all

Yoga of knowledge the final goal is the Transcendent." (CWSA 23: 318–320)

4.

"Another positive method belonging rather to the Rajayoga is to concentrate on the thought of the Brahman and shut out from us all other ideas, so that this dynamo of mind shall cease to work upon our external or varied internal existence; by mental cessation the vital and physical play also shall fall to rest in an eternal samadhi, some inexpressible deepest trance of the being in which we shall pass into the absolute Existence.

This discipline is evidently a self-centred and exclusive inner movement which gets rid of the world by denying it in thought and shutting the eyes of the soul to it in vision. But the universe is there as a truth in God even though the individual soul may have shut its eyes to it and the Self is there in the universe really and not falsely, supporting all that we have rejected, truly immanent in all things, really embracing the individual in the universal as well as embracing the universe in that which exceeds and transcends it. What shall we do with this eternal Self in this persistent universe which we see encompassing us every time we come out of the trance of inner meditation? The ascetic Path of Knowledge has its solution and its discipline for the soul that looks out on the universe. It is to regard the immanent and all-encompassing and all-constituting

Self in the image of the ether in which all forms are, which is in all forms, of which all forms are made. In that ether cosmic Life and Mind move as the Breath of things, an atmospheric sea in the ethereal, and constitute from it all these forms; but what they constitute are merely name and form and not realities; the form of the pot we see is a form of earth only and goes back into the earth, earth a form resolvable into the cosmic Life, the cosmic Life a movement that falls to rest in that silent immutable Ether. Concentrating on this knowledge, rejecting all phenomenon and appearance, we come to see the whole as an illusion of name and form in the ether that is Brahman; it becomes unreal to us; and the universe becoming unreal the immanence becomes unreal and there is only the Self upon which our mind has falsely imposed the name and form of the universe. Thus are we justified in the withdrawal of the individual self into the Absolute." (CWSA 23: 339–340)

5.

"The Rajayogic Pranayama purifies and clears the nervous system; it enables us to circulate the vital energy equally through the body and direct it also where we will according to need, and thus maintain a perfect health and soundness of the body and the vital being; ... It opens entirely the six centres of the psycho-physical system and brings into the waking consciousness the power of the awakened Shakti

and the light of the unveiled Purusha on each of the ascending planes. Coupled with the use of the mantra it brings the divine energy into the body and prepares for and facilitates that concentration in Samadhi which is the crown of the Rajayogic method.

Rajayogic concentration is divided into four stages; it commences with the drawing both of the mind and senses from outward things, proceeds to the holding of the one object of concentration to the exclusion of all other ideas and mental activities, then to the prolonged absorption of the mind in this object, finally, to the complete ingoing of the consciousness by which it is lost to all outward mental activity in the oneness of Samadhi. The real object of this mental discipline is to draw away the mind from the outward and the mental world into union with the divine Being. Therefore in the first three stages use has to be made of some mental means or support by which the mind, accustomed to run about from object to object, shall fix on one alone, and that one must be something which represents the idea of the Divine. It is usually a name or a form or a mantra by which the thought can be fixed in the sole knowledge or adoration of the Lord. By this concentration on the idea the mind enters from the idea into its reality, into which it sinks silent, absorbed, unified." (CWSA 24: 540–541)

6.

"In Rajayoga the chosen instrument is the mind. Our ordinary mentality is first disciplined, purified and directed towards the divine Being, then by a summary process of Asana and Pranayama the physical force of our being is stilled and concentrated, the life-force released into a rhythmic movement capable of cessation and concentrated into a higher power of its upward action, the mind, supported and strengthened by this greater action and concentration of the body and life upon which it rests, is itself purified of all its unrest and emotion and its habitual thought-waves, liberated from distraction and dispersion, given its highest force of concentration, gathered up into a trance of absorption. Two objects, the one temporal, the other eternal, are gained by this discipline. Mind-power develops in another concentrated action abnormal capacities of knowledge, effective will, deep light of reception, powerful light of thought-radiation which are altogether beyond the narrow range of our normal mentality; it arrives at the Yogic or occult powers around which there has been woven so much quite dispensable and yet perhaps salutary mystery. But the one final end and the one all-important gain is that the mind, stilled and cast into a concentrated trance, can lose itself in the divine consciousness and the soul be made free to unite with the divine Being." (CWSA 24: 609–610)

LXXVIII—Concentration in a Group While Doing Physical Activity in the Ashram

1.

"*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)

LXXIX—Self-concentration Is the Narrowness of Consciousness

1.

"I have already had the experience, partially, that when one is in this state of inner harmony and no part of the attention is turned towards the body, the body works perfectly well. It is this... 'self-concentration' which upsets everything. And this I have observed many times, many times.... In reality one does *make* oneself ill. It is the narrowness of consciousness, the division. If you let it work, there is... everywhere there is a Consciousness and a Grace that do everything so that all may go well, and it is because of this imbecility [stupidity] that all goes wrong —it is strange! The ego-centric imbecility, it is that which Sri Aurobindo calls 'the old man'.

It is truly interesting." (CWM 11: 207)

2.

"The real bar to self-surrender, whether to the Universal or to the Transcendent, is the individual's love of his own limitations. It is a natural love, since in the very formation of the individual being there is a tendency to concentrate on limits. Without that, there would be no sense of separateness—all would be mixed, as happens quite often in the mental and vital movements of consciousness." (CWM 3: 169)

LXXX—Concentration Is Good for All Children

1.

(*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. 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)

2.

"The only solution is to annul this test and all that are to come. Keep all the papers with you in a closed bundle—as something that has not been—and continue quietly your classes.

At the end of the year you will give notes to the students, not based on written test-papers, but on their behaviour, their concentration, their regularity, their promptness to understand and their openness of intelligence.

For yourself you will take it as a discipline to rely more on inner contact, keen observation, and impartial outlook. For the students it will be the necessity of understanding truly what they learn and not to repeat as a parrot what they have not fully understood.

And thus a true progress will have been made in the teaching." (CWM 12: 201)

3.

"Undeniably, what most impedes mental progress in children is the constant dispersion of their thoughts. Their thoughts flutter hither and thither like butterflies and they have to make a great effort to fix them. Yet this capacity is latent in them, for when you succeed in arousing their interest, they are capable of a good deal of attention. By his ingenuity, therefore, the educator will gradually help the child to become capable of a sustained effort of attention and a faculty of more and more complete absorption in the work in hand. All methods that can develop this faculty of attention from games to rewards are good and can all be utilised according to the need and the circumstances. But it is the psychological action that is most important and the Sovereign method is to arouse in the child an interest in what you want to teach him, a liking for work, a will to progress. To love to learn is the most precious gift that one can give to a child: to love to learn always and everywhere, so that all circumstances, all

happenings in life may be constantly renewed opportunities for learning more and always more.

For that, to attention and concentration should be added observation, precise recording and faithfulness of memory." (CWM 12: 25)

4.

"I am going to that class, it is a subject that does not enthuse me; but if I do not know how to take interest in this work, it is perhaps because there is something lacking in me, because somewhere in my brain some cells are missing. But then, if that is so, I am going to try to find out; I am going to listen properly, concentrate properly and above all drive away from my mind this kind of frivolity, this outward levity which makes me feel bored when there's something I do not grasp. Why do I get bored?... Because I do not progress.' When one does not progress, one gets bored—old and young, everybody—because we are here upon earth to progress. If we do not progress every minute, well, it is indeed boring, monotonous; it is not always pleasant, it is far from being fine. 'So I am going to find out today what progress I can make in this class; there is something I do not know and which I can learn." (CWM 5: 48)

5.

"*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)

6.

"To all those who took part in today's singing and music: Sri Aurobindo and myself have felt that there was a great progress this time. It was not only from the external point of view of execution, but in the greater aim of the concentration behind and in the inner attitude. May the day bring its benediction to all." (CWM 12: 237)

7.

"*If this sort of thing happens in the class, if one feels uneasy...*

That happens to you in the class? It means you do not listen to your teacher, otherwise it would not happen. If you were very attentive in your class and paid attention to your lesson, that could not happen to you. When you came out of it, then you would feel that, but not in the class. This means that you were dreaming or living within you or following your imagination, but you were not listening to your lessons.... But it is this that's wonderful, my children: when you are learning something, when you are studying, when you are concentrated on your lesson, these things

never happen to you. They may happen before, they may happen afterwards; but they won't happen at that time. For if you are quite concentrated, all your energies are concentrated on your study and there is nothing unpleasant there. You understand what you learn and you are interested in what you learn.

Sometimes, one tries to concentrate but one can't.

If truly you can't, then you have only to spend your time in seeking within yourself for the reason why it is so! Then if the teacher asks you a question, you have to tell him: 'I am sorry, I was not listening'." (CWM 5: 103)

8.

"Even a book of grammar! I do not say that books of grammar are very exciting, but even a grammar-book becomes interesting if you set out to learn it—even the most abstract rules of grammar. You cannot imagine how amusing it is when you truly want to learn, when you want to understand why it is so; instead of just committing to memory, learning by heart, if you want to understand: what are these words put there? For what idea, what real knowledge are they put there? What do they represent?... Any rule whatsoever is simply a human mental formula of something that exists in itself. Take any rule at all, it shows simply that a few heads have made an effort to formulate

in the way most clear to them, most condensed, something which exists in itself. So if one goes behind the words and begins searching for this something—the thing existing in itself, which is there, behind the words—how interesting it becomes! It is throbbing, thrilling! It is like passing through a jungle to discover a new country, like going on an exploration to the North Pole! So, if you do that with the laws of grammar, I assure you nothing in the world can bore you afterwards.

Understand instead of learning.

I admit this asks for a very great concentration. It demands a concentration capable of penetrating, digging a hole into the mental shell and passing through to the other side. And afterwards, it becomes worth the trouble.... You have been pushed against something cold, rigid, hard, unelastic. Then you concentrate, concentrate, concentrate sufficiently until... suddenly you are on the other side, and then you emerge into the light and you understand: 'Ah! that's wonderful! Now I understand.' A very tiny thing gives you a great joy.

You see it is possible not to get bored at school." (CWM 5: 104–105)

9.

"When you work, if you are able to concentrate, you can do absolutely in ten minutes what would otherwise take you one hour. If you want to gain time, learn to

concentrate. It is through attention that one can do things quickly and one does them much better. If you have a task that should take you half an hour—I don't say if you have to write for half an hour of course—but if you have to think and your mind is floating about, if you are thinking not only of what you are doing but also of what you have done and of what you will have to do and of your other subjects, all that makes you lose thrice as much time as you need to do your task. When you have too much to do, you must learn how to concentrate exclusively on what you are doing, with an intensity in your attention, and you can do in ten minutes what would otherwise take you one hour.

So I do not know, I cannot decide without full knowledge of the matter, if you have too much work, unless you bring me all the work you have to do; but I do not believe that you are overburdened with work. I say I do not believe it. Now, I do not assert this because I do not know what all the teachers do. But in any case, if you have much to do, you must learn how to concentrate much, all the more, and when you are doing a thing, to think of that only, and focus all your energy upon what you do. You gain at least half the time. So if you tell me: 'I have too much work', I answer: 'You do not concentrate enough'." (CWM 5: 124–125)

10.

"(Another child) *For a mathematical problem, sometimes the solution comes quickly, sometimes it takes too long.*

Yes, it is exactly that: it depends on the degree of concentration. If you observe yourself, you will notice this quite well: when it does not come, it is because of a kind of haziness in the brain, something cloudy, like a fog somewhere, and then you are there as in a dream. You push forward trying to find it, and it is as though you were pushing into cotton-wool, you do not see clearly there; and so nothing comes. You may remain in that state for hours.

Concentration consists precisely in removing the cloud. You gather together all the elements of your intelligence and fix them on one point, and then you do not even try actively to find the thing. All that you do is to concentrate in such a way as to see only the problem—but seeing not only its surface, seeing it in its depth, what it conceals. If you are able to gather together all your mental energies, bringing them to a point which is fixed on the enunciation of the problem, and you stay there, fixed, as though you were about to drill a hole in the wall, all of a sudden it will come. And this is the only way. If you try: Is it this, is it that, is it this, is it that?... You will never find anything or else you will need hours. You must get your mental forces to a point with strength enough to pierce through the words and strike upon the thing that is behind. There is a thing to be found—find it." (CWM 5: 125)

11.

"But if you are able, even for half an hour, to concentrate your attention on things that seem to you of very little

interest, like a rule of grammar, for example (the rules of grammar are some of the dry things I was speaking about, there are other things much more arid, but indeed the rules of grammar are sufficiently arid), if you take one of them and try to understand it—not learn it by heart and apply mechanically what you have learnt by heart, that will be of no use—but try to understand the thought behind the words: 'Why was this rule formulated in this way?' and try to find out your own formula for the thing; that is so interesting." (CWM 5: 126)

12.

"But you can at any time do both the things. When you are doing science, you turn it in one direction and when you do literature and art, you turn it in the other direction; but it is the same instrument: all depends on the orientation. If you have concentration, you can move this power of concentration from one place to another and in every way it will be effective. If you are occupied with science, you use it in a scientific way, and if you want to do art, you use it in an artistic way. But it is the same instrument and it is the same power of concentration. It is simply because people do not know this that they limit themselves. So the hinges get rusty, they do not turn any more. Otherwise, if one keeps the habit of turning them, they continue to turn. Moreover, even from the ordinary point of view, it is not rare to find a scientist having as his hobby some artistic

occupation—and the reverse also. It is because they have found that the one was not harmful to the other and that it was the same faculty which could be utilised in both.

Essentially, from the general point of view, particularly from the intellectual viewpoint, the most important thing is the capacity of attention and concentration, it is that which one must work at and develop. From the point of view of action (physical action), it is the will: you must work and build up an unshakable will. From the intellectual point of view, you must work and build up a power of concentration which nothing can shake. And if you have both, concentration and will, you will be a genius and nothing will resist you." (CWM 5: 128)

13.

"And you too, school-children, learn to enrich your intelligence by concentrating on the task your master gives you. And, while you mount the steps of knowledge as best you can, learn also to help, when need arises, the friend who is less alert and skilful than yourself." (CWM 2: 197)

LXXXI—Mental Education–Development of the Power of Concentration

1.

"A true mental education, which will prepare man for a higher life, has five 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.

"That age is very variable; it depends on people, depends on each individual. But still, it is understood that in the seven year period between the age of seven and fourteen,

one begins to reach the age of reason. If one is helped, one can become a reasoning being between seven and fourteen.

Before seven there are geniuses—there are always geniuses, everywhere—but as a general rule the child is not conscious of itself and doesn't know why or how to do things. That is the time to cultivate its attention, teach it to concentrate on what it does, give it a small basis sufficient for it not to be entirely like a little animal, but to belong to the human race through an elementary intellectual development.

After that, there is a period of seven years during which it must be taught to choose—to choose what it wants to be. If it chooses to have a rich, complex, well-developed brain, powerful in its functioning, well, it must be taught to work; for it is by work, by reflection, study, analysis and so on that the brain is formed. At fourteen you are ready—or ought to be ready—to know what you want to be." (CWM 8: 179–180)

3.

"So far we have dealt only with the education that can be given to all children born upon earth and which is concerned with purely human faculties. But one need not inevitably stop there. Every human being carries hidden within him the possibility of a greater consciousness which goes beyond the bounds of his present life and enables him

to share in a higher and a vaster life. Indeed, in all exceptional beings it is always this consciousness that governs their lives and organises both the circumstances of their existence and their individual reaction to these circumstances. What the human mental consciousness does not know and cannot do, this consciousness knows and does. It is like a light that shines at the centre of the being, radiating through the thick coverings of the external consciousness. Some have a vague intimation of its presence; a good many children are under its influence, which shows itself very distinctly at times in their spontaneous actions and even in their words. Unfortunately, since parents most often do not know what it is and do not understand what is happening in their child, their reaction to these phenomena is not a good one and all their education consists in making the child as unconscious as possible in this domain and concentrating all his attention on external things, thus accustoming him to think that they are the only ones that matter. It is true that this concentration on external things is very useful, provided that it is done in the proper way. The three lines of education—physical, vital and mental—deal with that and could be defined as the means of building up the personality, raising the individual out of the amorphous subconscious mass and making him a well-defined self-conscious entity." (CWM 12: 30–31)

4.

"*To avoid giving too much work to the students of the Higher Course, but without lowering the general standard, the ones who feel that they have too much to do could be invited to give up a few courses. They would then be able to concentrate their time and energy on those they wish to keep. This would be better than lightening the courses, which would as a result lose their value for the other students. It is only natural that besides gifted students who have no difficulty in following, we should have less gifted students who cannot follow at the same pace. The latter could set aside certain subjects and take them up later by doing an extra year. Is this a good solution?*

That depends. It cannot be made the general rule; for many of them it would not be much use. They have not reached a stage where they would be able to concentrate more on certain subjects if they had fewer subjects to study. The only result would be to encourage them to slacken—the very opposite of concentration!—and it would lead to a waste of time.

The solution does not lie there. What you should do is to teach the children to take interest in what they are doing—that is not the same thing as interesting the students! You must arouse in them the desire for knowledge, for progress. One can take an interest in anything—in sweeping a room, for example—if one does it

with concentration, in order to gain an experience, to make a progress, to become more conscious. I often say this to the students who complain of having a bad teacher. Even if they don't like the teacher, even if he tells them useless things or if he is not up to the mark, they can always derive some benefit from their period of class, learn something of great interest and progress in consciousness." (CWM 12: 169–170)

5.

"At the top of the head or above it is the right place for Yogic concentration in reading or thinking. (CWSA 29: 311)

LXXXII—Study Sri Aurobindo's Works with Concentration

1.

"*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)

2.

"*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)

LXXXIII—Reading While the Inner Being Remains in Concentration

1.

"The reading must learn to accommodate itself to the pressure [*of sadhana*]—that is, be done by the outer mind while the inner being remains in concentration." (CWSA 31: 64)

2.

"It is not necessary to be in touch with the outside world in this way [*by reading newspapers*]; it may be useful under certain circumstances and for some purposes. It may act too as a hindrance. All depends upon the consciousness from which it is done.

The reading of books of a light character may act as a relaxation of the mental consciousness. In the early stages it is not always possible to keep the mind to an unbroken spiritual concentration and endeavour and it takes refuge in other occupations, feeling even instinctively drawn to those of a lighter character." (CWSA 31: 66)

3.

"One can say generally that newspaper reading or novel reading is not helpful to the sadhana and is at best a concession to the vital which is not yet ready to be absorbed in the sadhana—unless and until one is able to

read in the right way with a higher consciousness which is not only not "disturbed" by the reading or distracted by it from the concentrated Yoga-consciousness but is able to make the right use of what is read from the point of view of the inner consciousness and the inner life." (CWSA 31: 66–67)

LXXXIV—Concentration Needed to Develop New Cells in the Brain to Understand What You Did Not Understand Earlier

1.

"But if we go back to the beginning, then it becomes extremely practical, concrete and very encouraging.... For we say this: in order to have the idea of the impossible, that something is 'impossible', you must attempt it. For example, if at this moment you feel that what I am telling you is impossible to understand (*laughing*), this means that you are trying to understand it; and if you try to understand it, this means it is within your consciousness, otherwise you could not try to understand it—just as I am in your consciousness, just as my words are in your consciousness, just as what Sri Aurobindo has written is also in your consciousness, otherwise you would have no contact with it. But for the moment it is impossible to understand, for want of a few small cells in the brain, nothing else, it is very simple. And as these cells develop through attention, concentration and effort, when you have listened attentively and made an effort to understand, well, after a few hours or a few days or a few months, new convolutions will be formed in your brain, and all this will become quite natural. You will wonder how there could have been a time when you did not understand: "It is so simple!" But so long as these convolutions are not there, you may make an

effort, you may even give yourself a headache, but you will not understand.” (CWM 8: 385)

LXXXV—Occult Things Done by Concentration

1.

"As I have said there, it is in the field of things seen, felt, done at a distance by a concentrated projection of consciousness. For instance, one is in a room and, due to an illness or an accident, one cannot move. Next to this room there is another; next to that there is a sort of bridge; after the bridge there are steps going down; and these steps go down to a big studio in the middle of a garden. Now, the person laid up in the room wishes to know what is going on in the studio. He concentrates his consciousness and then extends it, so to say (truly it is as though he extended it almost materially), and he goes along the whole way and reaches the studio. If he does this properly, he sees what there is in the studio, can hear what is going on, though he is not there himself: the body is lying in a bed in a room, but the consciousness is projected. It is a physical consciousness. It is not an inner state, for one sees physically, hears physically. If there are people in the room one sees them, and if they are speaking one hears them speaking. Naturally, it is not from the very first day that one succeeds; it asks for a very rigorous discipline. It corresponds a little (a little) to that capacity which was developed in the Red Indians due to the conditions of their life. I don't know how it is at present, but formerly they used to put their ear to the earth, and

they had so fine an ear that they could hear steps more than a mile away. They heard the steps of those who were walking at a distance of more than two or three kilometres simply by putting their ear to the ground. Or take the dog which, if given something to smell, finds the trail of that scent again, can follow it with its nose. Well, it is one kind of super-sense, that is, a sense that has reached such a degree of intensity and refinement that it can indeed feel what the ordinary sense does not feel, can see at a distance, really see, see physically at a distance, through walls. It is said that the blind develop a sense which enables them to feel an object at a distance. They do not see, they walk in darkness as in a black night; but they have a kind of sense of touch at a distance, a material contact due to which, long before touching the object, they know; for example, if there is a piece of furniture in their way, long before knocking against it, they feel it from a distance." (CWM 6: 10–11)

2.

"There is a state in which one realises that the effect of things, circumstances, all the movements and actions of life on the consciousness depends almost exclusively upon one's attitude to these things. There is a moment when one becomes sufficiently conscious to realise that things in themselves are truly neither good nor bad: they are such only in relation to us; their effect on us depends absolutely

upon the attitude we have towards them. The same thing, identically the same, if we take it as a gift of God, as a divine grace, as the result of the full Harmony, helps us to become more conscious, stronger, more true, while if we take it—exactly the very same circumstance—as a blow from fate, as a bad force wanting to affect us, this constricts us, weighs us down and takes away from us all consciousness and strength and harmony. And the circumstance in itself is *exactly* the same—of this, I wish all of you had this experience, for when you have it, you become master of yourself. Not only master of yourself but, in what concerns you, master of the circumstances of your life. And this depends exclusively upon the attitude you take; it is not an experience that occurs in the head, though it begins there, but an experience which can occur in the body itself. So much so, that—well, it is a realisation which naturally asks for a lot of work, concentration, self-mastery, consciousness pushed into Matter, but as a result, in accordance with the way the body receives shocks from outside, the effect may be different. And if you attain perfection in that field, you become master of accidents. I hope this will happen. It is possible. It is not only possible, it is *certain.* Only it is just one step forward. That is, this power you have—already fully and formidably realised in the mind—to act upon circumstances to the extent of changing them totally in their action upon you, that power can descend into Matter, into the physical substance itself,

the cells of the body, and give the same power to the body in relation to the things around it.

This is not a faith, it is a certitude that comes from experience." (CWM 6: 123–124)

3.

"For example, when I ask you to go deep down within yourselves, some of you will concentrate on a sensation, but others may just as well have the impression of going down into a deep well, and they clearly see the picture of steps going down into a dark and deep well, and they go down farther and farther, deeper and deeper, and sometimes reach precisely a door; they sit down before the door with the will to enter, and sometimes the door opens, and then they go in and see a kind of hall or a room or a cave or something, and from there, if they go on they may come to another door and again stop, and with an effort the door opens and they go farther. And if this is done with enough persistence and one can continue the experience, there comes a time when one finds oneself in front of a door which has... a special kind of solidity or solemnity, and with a great effort of concentration the door opens and one suddenly enters a hall of clarity, of light; and then, one has the experience, you see, of contact with one's soul...." (CWM 9: 379)

4.

"I take the greatest care to open the door within all of you, so that if you have just a small movement of concentration within you, you do not have to wait for long periods in front of a closed door that will not move, to which you have no key and which you do not know how to open.

The door is open, only you must look in that direction. You must not turn your back on it." (CWM 13: 82)

5.

"*No, but it is only an imagination, isn't it, Mother?*

An imagination? But what is an imagination?... You cannot imagine anything which doesn't exist in the universe! It is impossible to imagine something that doesn't exist somewhere. The only possibility is that one may not put one's image in its place: either one gives it virtues and qualities it doesn't have, or explains it with some other than the right explanation. But whatever one imagines exists somewhere; the main thing is to know where and to put it in its proper place.

Of course, if after having imagined that you are in front of a door which is opening, you thought that it was really a physical door inside your body, that would be a mistake! But if you realise that it is the mental form taken by your effort of concentration, this is quite correct. If you

go wandering in the mental world, you will see plenty of forms like that, all kinds of forms, which have no material reality but truly exist in the mental world.

You cannot think powerfully of something without your thought taking a form. But if you were to believe that this form was physical, that would obviously be an error, yet it really does exist in the mental world." (CWM 9: 379–380)

6.

"Well, the Divine's state of compassion is translated in the psychic consciousness by a sorrow that is not egoistic, a sorrow that is the expression of the identification through sympathy with universal sorrow. In the *Prayers and Meditations* I have said this (in one of the later ones), I have described at length an experience in which way I say, 'I wept... the sweetest tears of my life', because it was not over myself that I wept, you understand. Well, that is it. You know, human beings always suffer because of egoistic causes, humanly. … So, always at the root of human sorrow there is a turning back upon oneself, more or less conscious, more or less —how to put it?—acknowledged, but it is always that. Even when one weeps over another's misery, there is always a mixture. There is a mixture, but as soon as the psychic gets mingled in the sorrow, there is an element of 'compassion in reverse' … which comes into the being and, if one can disentangle the two, concentrate upon that, come out of one's ego and unite with this

compassion in reverse, through this one can come into contact with the great universal Compassion which is something immense, vast, calm, powerful, deep, full of perfect peace and an infinite sweetness. And this is what I mean when I say that if one just knows how to deepen one's sorrow, go right to its very heart, rise beyond the egoistic and personal part and go deeper, one can open the door of a great revelation. That does not mean that you must seek sorrow for sorrow's sake, but when it is there, when it comes upon you, always if you can manage to rise above the egoism of your sorrow—seeing first which is the egoistic part, what it is that makes you suffer, what the egoistic cause of your suffering is, and then rising above that and going beyond, towards something universal, towards a deep fundamental truth, then you enter that infinite Compassion, and there, truly it is a psychic door that opens. So, if someone sees me shedding tears, if at that moment one tries to unite completely—you understand, to enter into these tears, melt in them—this can open the door. One can open the door and have the full experience, a very exceptional experience, which leaves a very deep mark upon your consciousness. Usually it is never effaced. But if the door closes again, if once again you become what you are in your ordinary movements, that still remains somewhere behind and you can go back to it in moments of intense concentration; you can go back to it and you feel once again that immensity

of an infinite sweetness, a great peace, which... understands everything but not intellectually, which has compassion for all things, which can embrace all things and so heal all things." (CWM 6: 144–145)

7.

"But I can also tell you that when I was in Japan I met a man who had formed a group, for... It can't be said that it was for sadhana, but for a kind of discipline. He had a theory and it was on this theory that he had founded his group: that one can think in any part of one's being whatever if one concentrates there. That is to say, instead of thinking in your head, you can think in your chest. And he said that one could think here (*gesture*) in the stomach. He took the stomach as the seat of *prāṇa*, the vital force.

…

I have tried it, it is quite easy, precisely because, as I told you a while ago, the mental force, mental activity is independent of the brain. We are in the habit of using the brain but we can use something else or rather, concentrate the mental force elsewhere, and have the impression that our mental activity comes from there. One can concentrate one's mental force in the solar plexus, here (*gesture*), and feel the mental activity coming out from there." (CWM 6: 310–311)

8.

"It is natural to think with the head. How can one make a habit of it?

It has been a habit for a very long time—the parents of the parents of the parents, and so on—but not for everyone! It is like the habit of looking with the eyes, but it has been proved that it is possible to create centres of vision elsewhere than in the eyes—with a little concentration. I don't say that the brain is not made for thinking, I have never told you that, but I said that thought does not depend upon the brain, which is quite a different thing. If one knows how to handle mental forces, one sees clearly that the brain is very suitable for expressing oneself—it has evidently been made for that, for receiving thoughts and putting them into action, into expression, words—but it doesn't need to be exclusive." (CWM 6: 314–315)

9.

"I mean that this exclusiveness is a habit. However, when one has done a little yoga seriously, one knows very well that one can think here (*Mother shows the centre of the forehead between the eyebrows, then the right side, then the left*) one can think here, one can think here, one can think in front and, as I was saying just now, one can think much higher up—but naturally, one thinks that all thought-phenomena, concentration, are produced in the brain—and

when one thinks up above, here (*Mother shows the space above the head*), one thinks much better than when one thinks here. It is only that one has never tried to do otherwise. Not 'never tried', there are quite a number of people who have tried and have succeeded." (CWM 6: 315)

10.

"*Sweet Mother, how can we cut the knot of the ego?*

How to cut it? Take a sword and strike it (*laughter*), when one becomes conscious of it. For usually one is not; we think it quite normal, what happens to us; and in fact it is very normal but we think it quite good also. So to begin with one must have a great clear-sightedness to become aware that one is enclosed in all these knots which hold one in bondage. And then, when one is aware that there's something altogether tightly closed in there—so tightly that one has tried in vain to move it—then one imagines one's will to be a very sharp sword-blade, and with all one's force one strikes a blow on this knot (imaginary, of course, one doesn't take up a sword in fact), and this produces a result. Of course you can do this work from the psychological point of view, discovering all the elements constituting this knot, the whole set of resistances, habits, preferences, of all that holds you narrowly closed in. So when you grow aware of this, you can concentrate and call the divine Force and the Grace and strike a good blow on this formation, these things so closely held, like that, that nothing can

separate them. And at that moment you must resolve that you will no longer listen to these things, that you will listen only to the divine Consciousness and will do no other work except the divine work without worrying about personal results, free from all attachment, free from all preference, free from all wish for success, power, satisfaction, vanity, all this.... All this must disappear and you must see only the divine Will incarnated in your will and making you act. Then, in this way, you are cured." (CWM 6: 390–391)

11.

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

One day it will happen. Only, you must do it with concentration, intensity and sincerity; that is, it must not happen that while you are asking for this, another part of your being is telling itself, 'After all, this has no importance.' Or maybe you think of something else, what you are going to put on or the person you will meet, anything at all, a

thousand desires. You must be there, fully, for *one minute.* Of course if you multiply the minute, it goes so much the quicker. But as I also said, if one is able not to contradict the next minute the aspiration one had the minute before, it is easier; if not, it pushes sincerity away." (CWM 6: 399–400)

12.

"*Mother, when we make an effort, there's something in us which becomes very self-satisfied and boastful and contented with this effort, and that spoils everything. Then how can we get rid of this?*

Ah, that's what looks on at what it is doing! There is always someone who observes when one is doing something. Now sometimes, he becomes proud. Obviously, this takes away much strength from the effort. I think it is that: it is the habit of looking at oneself acting, looking at oneself living. It is necessary to observe oneself but I think it is still more necessary to try to be absolutely sincere and spontaneous, very spontaneous in what one does: not always to go on observing oneself, looking at what one is doing, judging oneself—sometimes severely. In fact it is almost as bad as patting oneself with satisfaction, the two are equally bad. One should be so sincere in his aspiration that he doesn't even know he is aspiring, that he becomes the aspiration

itself. When this indeed can be realised, one truly attains to an extraordinary power.

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

13.

"Words are words. After all, they mean nothing, unless there is something behind. Have you never noticed that when you speak to certain people, you may express yourself quite clearly and yet they understand nothing; and to others you say just two words and they understand immediately? … Therefore, it does not depend upon the external form, the words one speaks, but on the force of the thought one puts into them; and the greater, stronger, more precise and clear the thought-force, the more the chance of what you say being understood by people who are able to receive that force. … But with people who come altogether from elsewhere, with whom you have never

spoken, you need a little time to adjust and adapt yourself to understand what they mean by the words they use.... What is it that makes you understand? It is just the kind of mental sense that is behind the words. When the thought is strongly thought out, there is a powerful vibration and it is that which is sensed; the word is only an intermediary means. You can develop this sense to the point of having a direct mental contact with a minimum of words or even without any words at all; but then you must have a very great force of thought-concentration. And for everything one does, it is like that. When there is a developed consciousness behind, when one has the power to concentrate it, one can do anything at all—this consciousness will act. Certainly it is not the bodily mechanism that makes you act; the mechanism is simply an instrument, nothing more. The day you catch that (it is invisible, but you can catch it), and when you catch it and put it into your movement, this movement becomes conscious and you do well whatever you do. The day you do not catch it, it slips from you like water through your fingers; and then you are clumsy, you do not understand, you do not know what to do. Hence, it is not the physical mechanism that counts, it is what is behind." (CWM 5: 73–74)

14.

"But imagine this same vital power of expression, with the inspiration coming from far above—the highest inspiration possible, when all the heavens open before us—then that becomes wonderful. There are certain passages of César Franck, certain passages of Beethoven, certain passages of Bach, there are pieces by others also which have this inspiration and power. But it is only a moment, it comes as a moment, it does not last. You cannot take the entire work of an artist as being on that level. Inspiration comes like a flash; sometimes it lasts sufficiently long, when the work is sustained; and when that is there, the *same effect* is produced, that is, if you are attentive and concentrated, suddenly that lifts you up, lifts up all your energies, it is as though someone opened out your head and you were flung into the air to tremendous heights and magnificent lights. It produces in a few seconds results that are obtained with so much difficulty through so many years of yoga. Only, in general, one may fall down afterwards, because the consciousness is not there as the basis; one has the experience and afterwards does not even know what has happened. But if you are prepared, if you have indeed prepared your consciousness by yoga and then the thing happens, it is almost definitive."
(CWM 5: 75–76)

15.

"I have said this often; for example, to those who are here, who learn that someone in their family is very ill and feel that childish impulse of wanting to rush immediately to the spot to attend to the sick person. I tell you, unless it is an exceptional case and there is nobody to attend on the sick person (and at times even in such a case), if you know how to keep the right attitude and concentrate with affection and good will upon the sick person, if you know how to pray for him and make helpful formations, you will do him much more good than if you go to nurse him, feed him, help him wash himself, indeed all that everybody can do. Anybody can nurse a person. But not everybody can make good formations and send out forces that act for healing." (CWM 5: 132–133)

16.

"For instance, you are with someone. This person tells you something, you tell him the contrary (as it usually happens, simply through a spirit of contradiction) and you begin arguing. Naturally, you will never come to any point, except a quarrel if you are ill-natured. But instead of doing that, instead of remaining shut up in your own ideas or your own words, if you tell yourself: 'Wait a little, I am going to try and see why he said that to me. Yes, why did he tell me that?' And you concentrate: 'Why, why, why?' You stand there, just like that, trying. The other person continues speaking, doesn't he?—and is very happy too, for you don't

contradict him any longer! He talks profusely and is sure he has convinced you. Then you concentrate more and more on what he is saying, and with the feeling that gradually, through his words, you are entering his mind. When you enter his head, suddenly you enter into his way of thinking, and next, just imagine, you understand why he is speaking to you thus! And then, if you have a fairly swift intelligence and put what you have just come to understand alongside what you had known before, you have the two ways together, and so can find the truth reconciling both. And here you have truly made progress. And this is the best way of widening one's thought." (CWM 5: 219)

17.

"*Illnesses enter through the subtle body, don't they? How can they be stopped?*

Ah! Here we are.... If one is very sensitive, very sensitive—one must be very sensitive—the moment they touch the subtle body and try to pass through, one feels it. It is not like something touching the body, it is a sort of feeling. If you are able to perceive it at that moment, you have still the power to say 'no', and it goes away. But for this one must be extremely sensitive.

… but without going so far one can very easily feel a kind of little discomfort (it is not something which is

imposed with a great force), a little uneasiness coming near you from anywhere at all: front, behind, above, below. If at that moment you are sufficiently alert, you say 'no', as though you were cutting off the contact with great strength, and it is finished. If you are not conscious at that moment, the next minute or a few minutes later you get a queer sick feeling inside, a cold in the back, a little uneasiness, the beginning of some disharmony; you feel a maladjustment somewhere, as though the general harmony had been disturbed. Then you must concentrate all the more and with a great strength of will keep the faith that nothing can do you harm, nothing can touch you. This suffices, you can throw off the illness at that moment. But you must do this immediately, you understand, you must not wait five minutes, it must be done at once. If you wait too long and begin to feel really an uneasiness somewhere, and something begins to get quite disturbed, then it is good to sit down, concentrate and call the Force, concentrate it on the place which is getting disturbed, that is to say, which is beginning to become ill. But if you don't do anything at all, an illness indeed gets lodged somewhere; and all this, because you were not sufficiently alert. And sometimes one is obliged to follow the entire curve to find the favourable moment again and get rid of the business. I have said somewhere that in the physical domain all is a question of method—a method is necessary for realising everything. And if the illness has succeeded in

touching the physical-physical, well, you must follow the procedure needed to get rid of it." (CWM 4: 267–269)

18.

"In the mental world, for instance, there is a domain of the physical mind which is related to physical things and keeps the memory of physical happenings upon earth. It is as though you were entering into innumerable vaults, one following another indefinitely, and these vaults are filled with small pigeon-holes, one above another, one above another, with tiny doors. Then if you want to know something and if you are conscious, you look, and you see something like a small point—a shining point; you find that this is what you wish to know and you have only to concentrate there and it opens; and when it opens, there is a sort of an unrolling of something like extremely subtle manuscripts, but if your concentration is sufficiently strong you begin to read as though from a book. And you have the whole story in all its details. There are thousands of these little holes, you know; when you go for a walk there, it is as though you were walking in infinity. And in this way you can find the exact facts about whatever you want to know." (CWM 4: 110)

19.

"For instance, when one sees somebody in a dream (I am not speaking of dreams in which you see somebody unknown, but of those where you see somebody you know, who comes to see you) there are all sorts of explanations possible. If it is someone living far away from you, in another country, perhaps that person has written a letter to you and the letter is on the way, so you see this person because he has put a formation of himself in his letter, a concentration; you see the person and the next morning you get the letter. This is a very frequent occurrence. If it is a person with a very strong thought power, he may think of you from very far, from his own country and concentrate his thought, and this concentration takes the form of that person in your consciousness. Perhaps it is that this person is calling you intentionally; deliberately he comes to tell you something or give you a sign, if he is in danger, if he is sick. Suppose he has something important to tell you, he begins to concentrate (he knows how to do it, as everyone does not) and he enters your atmosphere, comes to tell you something special. Now if you are passive and attentive, you receive the message." (CWM 4: 319)

20.

"When you are thinking of someone, some part of you is automatically in contact with this person, and if to your thought is added a will that this person may be like this or like that or do this or that or understand this or that—

whatever it may be—well, you are practising occultism, only you don't know it.... There are people who do this with power, and when they have a strong thought it manifests and is realised. There are people in whom it is very feeble and they do not obtain many results. It depends on the power of your thought and also on your power of concentration. But this kind of occultism everybody practises without even knowing it." (CWM 9: 187)

21.

"But for more subtle things, the method is to make for yourself an exact image of what you want, to come into contact with the corresponding vibration, and then to concentrate and do exercises—such as to practise seeing through an object or hearing through a sound, or seeing at a distance." (CWM 10: 132)

LXXXVI—Caution in Concentration

1.

"For the giddiness, it may be that in concentration you go partly out of your body; then, if you get up and move before the whole consciousness has come back, there is just such a giddiness as you describe. You can observe in future and see whether it is not this that happens. One has to be careful not to move after deep concentration or trance, till there is the full consciousness in the body." (CWSA 31: 400)

2.

"The push to externalization must be rejected always—it is a way the physical consciousness has of slipping out of the condition of concentrated sadhana. To keep in the inner consciousness and work from it on the external being till that also is ready is very necessary when the work of change is being specially directed towards the physical consciousness."
(CWSA 31: 407)

LXXXVII—What Disturbs the Concentration

1.

"It is only the ordinary vital emotions, which waste the energy and disturb the concentration and peace, that have to be discouraged. Emotion itself is not a bad thing; it is a necessary part of the nature, and psychic emotion is one of the most powerful helps to the sadhana. Psychic emotion, bringing tears of love for the Divine or tears of ananda, ought not to be suppressed: it is only a vital mixture that brings disturbance in the sadhana." (CWSA 29: 351)

2.

"Then for the tumultuous activity of the mind which prevents your concentration. But that or else a more tiresome obstinate grinding mechanical activity is always the difficulty when one tries to concentrate and it takes a long time to get the better of it. That or the habit of sleep which prevents either the waking concentration or the conscious samadhi or the absorbed and all-excluding trance which are the three forms that Yogic concentration takes. But it is surely ignorance of Yoga, its processes and its difficulties that makes you feel desperate and pronounce yourself unfit for ever because of this quite ordinary obstacle. The insistence of the ordinary mind and its wrong reasonings, sentiments and judgments, the

random activity of the thinking mind in concentration or its mechanical activity, the slowness of response to the veiled or the initial touch are the ordinary obstacles the mind imposes just as pride, ambition, vanity, sex, greed, grasping of things for one's own ego are the difficulties and obstacles offered by the vital. 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. If the nature takes the way of fighting down the difficulties first, then the first half of the way is long and tedious and the complaint of the want of the response of the Divine arises. But really the Divine is there all the time, working behind the veil as well as waiting for the recognition of his response and for the response to the response to be possible." (CWSA 31: 20–21)

3.

"To deal with this mind two things are necessary, (1) not so much to try to control or fight with or suppress it as to stand back from it: one looks at it and sees what it is but refuses to follow its thoughts or run about among the

objects it pursues, remaining at the back of the mind quiet and separate; (2) to practise quietude and concentration in this separateness, until the habit of quiet takes hold of the physical mind and replaces the habit of these small activities. This of course takes time and can only come by practice. What you propose to do is therefore the right thing." (CWSA 31: 30)

4.

"This going out of the mind and this siege of thoughts is a difficulty which everybody has to meet for a time or often when he wants to concentrate within. You should not allow it to depress you or make you hopeless or lead you to think that there is some special disability in you from which others do not suffer. One has to keep one's poise, recognise it as an inherent difficulty of the nature of mind (physical mind), one which has to be overcome and will be overcome in time. In that way one feels the pressure of these obstacles less and gets over it sooner than if one gets distressed or upset by them or takes them for a sign of incapacity for the Yoga." (CWSA 31: 31)

5.

"The unsteadiness you speak of is the nature of the human physical mind—almost everybody has it, for the physical mind goes after all sorts of outward things. To fix the consciousness within, to keep it concentrated on the Divine

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

6.

"This [*restless thinking*] is what we call the activity of the mind, which always comes in the way of the concentration and tries to create doubt and dispersion of the energies. It can be got rid of in two ways, by rejecting it and pushing it out, till it remains as an outside force only—by bringing down the higher peace and light into the physical mind." (CWSA 31: 20)

7.

"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 31: 39)

8.

"The difficulty must have come from distrust and disobedience. For distrust and disobedience are like falsehood (they are themselves a falsity, based on false ideas and impulses), they interfere in the action of the Power, prevent it from being felt or from working fully and diminish the force of the Protection. Not only in your inward concentration, but in your outward acts and movements you must take the right attitude. If you do that and put everything under the Mother's guidance, you will find that difficulties begin to diminish or are much more easily got over and things become steadily smoother.

In your work and acts you must do the same as in your concentration. Open to the Mother, put them under her guidance, call in the peace, the supporting Power, the protection and, in order that they may work, reject all wrong influences that might come in their way by creating wrong, careless or unconscious movements.

Follow this principle and your whole being will become one, under one rule, in the peace and sheltering Power and Light." (CWSA 31: 143)

9.

"I have already told you the nature of the difficulty that has arisen in you, that it is nothing but the revolt of your vital mind and vital ego and I have pointed out to you the only way in which it can be overcome. You had by an effort supported by a special concentration from us arrived at a first psychic opening in your mind and heart which enabled you even to throw out for a time the sexual obsession from your vital consciousness. But, as often happens, soon after all that is obscure, egoistic, self-centred in the vital being rose up in revolt and created a confused farrago of desires, demands, disappointments, grievances, misapprehensions, false reasonings and especially a wrong attitude of claim and demand which was the entire contradiction of the psychic and spiritual attitude and wholly inconsistent with the right conditions of sadhana. It is this of which your recent letters were full. The forces that use this kind of vital condition for the breaking of a sadhak's spiritual chances became active and turned all into a drive to go away. Your only chance is to refuse to listen to all these ideas and suggestions and adopt resolutely an attitude of complete self-giving and the refusal of all feelings of desire, claim and ego and all

justifications of these feelings by the vital mind which is full of a false view of things and therefore cannot be trusted even when its reasonings seem to be plausible." (CWSA 31: 223–224)

10.

"At the same time this mind becomes active as it has now with regard to *X* or begins to judge and criticise and this too leads to nervousness and irritation. These things belong to the old mind you are trying to leave and therefore stand in the way of concentration and quietude. They should be stopped at their root by rejecting the suggestions of the physical mind as soon as they begin. 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)

11.

"In sadhana one has to have a control over the mind and all its actions; in dispersion one is on the contrary controlled and run away with by the mind and unable to keep it to its subject. If the mind is to be always dispersed, then you can't concentrate on reading either or any other occupation, you will be fit for nothing except perhaps talking, mixing, flirting with women and similar occupations." (CWSA 31: 323–324)

12.

"You are mistaken in thinking that the sadhana of *X*, *Y* and *Z* does not suffer by the dispersion of their minds in all directions. They would have been far farther on the path if they did a concentrated Yoga—even *Y* who has an enormous receptivity and is eager for progress might have gone thrice as far as he has done." (CWSA 31: 324)

13.

"It is true that the habit of gossip and fault-finding with others does interfere because it brings down the consciousness from a higher to a lower level. But I do not think a retirement such as you propose is the way to cure it. It would only be suspended and the tendency come up again when you resumed free intercourse with others. It is on its field itself that it has to be first observed, then cured by detachment from it and rejection of it when it comes. A partial retirement may sometimes be helpful for concentration,—but not for these things; there the only cure is what I suggest or else the descent of a higher consciousness to replace the present imperfect nature." (CWSA 31: 352)

14.

"Dullness and dispersion are the two sides of the physical's resistance to the peace and concentrated power. They correspond to the inertia and the chaotic activity of physical

Nature, that aspect of it which makes some scientists now say that all is brought about by chance and there is no certitude of things but only probability." (CWSA 31: 392)

15.

"To be always thinking about food and troubling the mind is quite the wrong way of getting rid of the food-desire. Put the food element in the right place in the life, in a small corner, and don't concentrate on it but on other things." (CWSA 31: 421)

16.

"What is necessary is to take enough food and think no more about it, taking it as a means for the maintenance of the physical instrument only. But just as one should not overeat, so one should not diminish unduly—it produces a reaction which defeats the object—for the object is not to allow either the greed for food or the heavy tamas of the physical which is the result of excessive eating to interfere with the concentration on the spiritual experience and progress. If the body is left insufficiently nourished, it will think of food more than otherwise." (CWSA 31: 427)

17.

"I think it is not safe to admit any suggestion of not eating— sometimes it opens the door for the non-eating force to take hold of the mind and there is trouble. That

comes easily because the inner being of course does not need any food and this non need is attempted to be thrown by some forces on the body also which is not under the same happy law. It is better to allow the condition [*of peaceful concentration*] to grow in intensity until it can last even through the meal and after. I suppose it is not really the meal that disturbs but the coming out into the outer consciousness which is a little difficult to avoid when one goes to eat; but that can be overcome in time." (CWSA 31: 430)

18.

"It is not a right method to try to keep awake at night; the suppression of the needed sleep makes the body tamasic and unfit for the necessary concentration during the waking hours. The right way is to transform the sleep and not suppress it, and especially to learn how to become more and more conscious in sleep itself. If that is done, sleep changes into an inner mode of consciousness in which the sadhana can continue as much as in the waking state, and at the same time one is able to enter into other planes of consciousness than the physical and command an immense range of informative and utilisable experience." (CWSA 31: 438)

19.

"The cough shows probably some difficulty against concentration in the physical mind. The best is not to force

concentration, but to remain quiet and call and let things work themselves out through the force of the Mother." (CWSA 30: 478)

20.

"As for the uneasiness or feebleness there when you talk loudly etc., that also happens at such times. It is because the concentration of energy which is necessary for the inner work is broken and the energies thrown out, exhausting the parts by two inconsistent pullings. It is better when any working is going on inside to be very quiet in speech and as sparing as possible. At other times it does not so much matter." (CWSA 30: 483)

21.

"Diabetes or any other physical illness cannot be a cause of absence of concentration. There is always a difficulty in the beginning to concentrate for more than a short time because it is contrary to the habits of the physical mind. Perseverance is necessary. At the same time there should be a call for the help of the Divine Power above the mind; for if one can open to that, the process can be more rapid." (CWSA 31: 34)

22.

"You have only to see when the body is just a little out of order, when it is ill, how many things you can no longer

do, even with a strong will, a great concentration of the vital and the mind. Even when one has the precise knowledge of what ought to be done, if the body is out of order one can no longer do it. Even... I mean, even an activity which is not purely physical, as for instance, writing something." (CWM 7: 44)

LXXXVIII—One who Concentrates on the Lower Vital

1.

"The lower vital is a very obscure plane and it can be fully opened with advantage only when the other planes above it have been thrown wide to light and knowledge. One who concentrates on the lower vital without that higher preparation and without knowledge is likely to fall into many confusions. This does not mean that experiences of this plane may not come earlier or even at the beginning; they do come of themselves, but they must not be given too large a place." (CWSA 31: 165)

2.

"As for the other thing it is the struggle between the mind and psychic which see the right thing to do and the restless vital. It is not something wrong in the head, on the contrary the head is getting more and more to see what is right; it is only that the vital restlessness is not dominated by the mind and wants to follow its own feeling. That happens to everybody so long as the vital is not properly under our control. Even in ordinary circumstances and in ordinary life the vital is always carrying away the being to do what the mind disapproves, but there it is felt to be something normal, especially as the vital very usually persuades the mind to find arguments and justify its mistakes. You have

to persist until the understanding mind and psychic in you become normally stronger than this part of the vital that does not want to be quiet and concentrated or see things rightly. Then you will not be so much troubled by this disagreement between two parts of the being." (CWSA 31: 133)

3.

"If you are not satisfied with what you are, take advantage of the Divine's help and change yourself. If you haven't the courage to change, submit to your destiny and keep quiet. But to constantly complain about the condition you are in, without doing anything to change it, is a waste of your time and energy.

The difficulties can disappear only when the egoistic concentration upon desires and conveniences disappears." (CWM 14: 222)

LXXXIX—Yogic Death with the Mind Concentrated with Faith and Absorption in the Divine

1.

"Suicide is not only a weak and unmanly evasion, but it is worse than useless since the same misery continues after death intensified in the consciousness which can think of nothing else and one has to come back to earth and face the same difficulties under worse conditions. The Gita has never said that suicide can under any circumstances lead to Nirvana; the death spoken of is a natural or a Yogic death with the mind concentrated with faith and absorption in the Divine. I am sure that Ramakrishna also never meant such a thing as that anyone dying under any circumstances would have his last wish satisfied. There is no escape by that kind of exit. I do not know either how you can say that you love me and at the same time deliberately decide to deal such a blow to me as your suicide would be. … You must have been very much clouded by your fit of despair not to see that. All that apart, I must press on you not to allow these dark attacks with their morbid suggestions to carry you away. If you have the true yearning for the Divine, as you have undoubtedly in your soul, it is not by yielding to vital weakness that you will show it but by persisting, whatever the time and the difficulties, till it is achieved. You have promised to do that and I again recall you to your promise. Nirvana itself cannot be so achieved,

but only by rising above all other desires and attachments until one has the supreme liberation and peace." (CWSA 31: 750–751)

2.

"The idea of suicide is always a sign of these Asuric formations. Like all the rest it is perfectly irrational—for the suicide after death goes through a hell of misery far worse than was possible in life and when he is reborn he has to face the same problems and difficulties he fled from, but in an acuter form and in much less favourable circumstances. The other justifying suggestions were equally irrational and untrue. Wherever you went, the blow would always fall on ourselves and the Asram, for you are and would remain too intimately identified with us for it to be otherwise and distance would make no difference. And certainly the verse in the Gita does not cover a case of suicide, but refers to the consciousness and concentration of the Yogi in his departure." (CWSA 32: 101)

XC—Concentration of the Mother

1.

"*Today while meditating in the Pranam hall before the Mother came down, I saw in meditation: ' The Mother is absorbed in deep concentration.' Why did I see her like that?*

The Mother is always in a concentrated consciousness in her inner being—so it is quite natural that you should see like that." (CWSA 32: 272)

2.

"What people see around the Mother is first her aura, as it is called nowadays, and secondly the forces of Light that pour out from her when she concentrates, as she always does on the roof for instance. (Everybody has an aura—but in most it is weak and not very luminous, in the Mother's aura there is the full play of lights and powers.) People do not see it usually because it is a subtle physical and not a gross material phenomenon. They can see only on two conditions, first if they develop sufficient subtle sight, secondly if the aura itself begins to become so strong that it affects the sheath of gross matter which conceals it." (CWSA 32: 269–270)

3.

"It seems as if at the time of meditation, the atmosphere of the Meditation Hall extends to all the Asram houses.

It is natural that it should be so as the Mother when she concentrates on the inner work is accustomed spontaneously to spread her consciousness over the whole Asram. So to anyone who is sensitive, it must be felt anywhere in the Asram, though perhaps more strongly in the nearer houses on an occasion like the evening meditation." (CWSA 32: 528)

4.

"*Today during the meditation with the Mother, I felt that I could receive her help easily and naturally, without the least effort or strain. Does this mean that something in the being naturally becomes quiet by her physical presence?*

It is not by the physical presence but by the Mother's concentration at the time of Meditation which brings the quiet to those who can receive it." (CWSA 32: 529)

5.

"The Mother smiles on all without regard to these things. When she does not smile, it is because she is either in trance, or absorbed, or concentrated on something within the sadhak that needs her attention— something that has

to be done for him or brought down or looked at. It does not mean that there is anything bad or wrong in him. I have told this a hundred times to any number of sadhaks—but in many the vital does not want to accept that because it would lose its main source of grievance, revolt, abhiman, desire to go away or give up the Yoga, things which are very precious to it. The very fact that it has these results and leads to nothing but these darknesses ought to be enough to show you that this imagination about Mother's not smiling as a sign of absence of her grace or love is a device and suggestion of the Adversary." (CWSA 32: 541–542)

6.

"When the Mother does not smile, it is not from displeasure but in almost every case from some reason not connected with any action of the sadhak, but either from absorption or concentration on something that is being done. As you say, it does not matter—what is important is to receive what has to be received." (CWSA 32: 540)

7.

"It is entirely untrue that Mother was pushing you away today. There may be days when she is absorbed and therefore physically inattentive to what her hand is doing. But today she was specially attentive to you and at the Pranam she was putting force on you for peace, tranquillity

and the removal of the difficulty. If she at all acted by the palm or anything else, it was for that she was acting. About this there can be no mistake, for she was specially conscious of her action and purpose today. What must have happened was that something must have felt the pressure and intervened and persuaded your physical mind by suggestion that it was *you* she was pushing away, not the difficulty. This is a very clear instance of how easy it is for the sadhaks to make a wrong inference and think that the Mother is doing the very opposite of what she is doing. Very often when she has concentrated most to help them by pressing out their difficulties, they have written to her, 'You were very severe and displeased with me this morning.' The only way to avoid these wrong reactions is to have full psychic confidence in the Mother, believing that all she does is for their good and out of the Divine Mother's care for them and not against them. Then nothing of this kind will happen. Those who do that, can get the full help of her concentration even if in her absorption she does not touch the head or smile. That is why I have constantly told the sadhaks not to put their own interpretations on the Mother's appearance or actions at the Pranam—because these interpretations may always be wrong and make an opening for an unfounded depression and an attack." (CWSA 32: 552)

8.

"When Mother stands on the stairs in full concentration it is quite a different thing from standing talking with people. In the former condition nothing can touch her. In the second she has to identify herself with the general physical consciousness and open herself to its forces, so the conditions are not the same. Nowadays there is an improvement in the physical, but still limits must be kept." (CWSA 32: 588)

9.

"*I believe the Mother is using glasses for reading. Would she like to try my treatment [palming, etc.]?*

The Mother has seen that these methods are perfectly effective, but she cannot follow a treatment because she has no time. Her sight is variable: when she can rest and concentrate a little and do what is necessary, she can read without glasses." (CWSA 32: 594)

10.

"The Mother's sleep is not sleep but an inner consciousness, in which she is in communication with people or working everywhere. At the time she is aware, but she does not carry all that always into her waking consciousness or in her memory. A call would come in the occupied waking mind as the thought of the person

coming—in a more free or in a concentrated state as a communication from the person in question; in concentration or in sleep or trance she would see the person coming and speaking to her or herself going there. Besides that wherever the Force is working, the Presence is there." (CWSA 32: 130–131)

11.

"For the laying bare of each falsehood is in itself a victory—each acknowledgment of error is the demolition of one of the lords of Darkness. It may be an acknowledgment to oneself, provided it is absolutely honest and is no subtle regret apt to be forgotten the next moment and without the strength to make an unbreakable resolution not to repeat the mistake. Or it may be the acknowledgment to the Divine embodied in the Guru. As a result of direct personal confession to the Guru, your resolution remains no longer your own, because, if you are sincere, the Divine's fiat goes forth in your favour. To give you an idea of what this means I shall relate an experience of mine when I first met Sri Aurobindo in Pondicherry. I was in deep concentration, seeing things in the Supermind, things that were to be but which were somehow not manifesting. I told Sri Aurobindo what I had seen and asked him if they would manifest. He simply said, 'Yes.' And immediately I saw that the Supramental had touched the earth and was beginning to be realised! This was the first time I had

witnessed the power to make real what is true: it is the very same power that will bring about the realisation in you of the truth when you come in all sincerity, saying, 'This falsehood I want to get rid of', and the answer which you get is 'Yes'. " (CWM 3: 141-142)

12.

"The illness has no doubt a physical cause, but there is associated with it a strong resistance to the Force—which is evidently seated in the subconscient, since you are not aware of it. This is shown by the fact that after Mother put a concentrated force there yesterday, the whole thing returned more violently after an hour's relief. That is always a sign of a violent and obstinate resistance somewhere. It is only if this is overcome or disappears that complete relief can come." (CWSA 32: 233)

13.

"So if each one who comes, comes with a kind of trust, of inner opening, and is ready to receive what is given, and naturally is not dispersed... there are people there who pass their time looking at what is happening, what the others are doing; and in this way they don't have much chance to receive anything very much... but if one comes concentrated on what he can receive and is as quiet as possible, and as though he were open to receive something, as though he were opening his consciousness,

like this (*gesture*) to receive something … if they are simply like this (*gesture*), open and awaiting the Force—I go straight in and what has to be done I do. And that's the moment when I know exactly, you see, I do this (*gesture*), quite slowly —from above I see *very well*, *very well*— exactly the condition in which each one is. That's the morning's work.

The 'Concentration' is something absolutely different. I try, first, to make the atmosphere as calm, quiet, unified as possible, as though I were spreading the consciousness out wide, like this (*gesture*); and then from far above I bring down the Force as much as I can and put it upon you as strongly as I can. So this depends exclusively on whether one is quite tranquil and well concentrated; here one must be concentrated, one must not be dispersed, one must be concentrated, but very... how to put it?... plain, very horizontal. Like this (*gesture*). Then the Force puts a pressure. And it's above all for unifying, penetrating the whole and endeavouring to make of it something cohesive which can express collectively the Force from above.

In the morning it is an individual work, in the evening it is a collective work. But naturally, within that, each one can feel individually, but you see, it is a work of unification which I do in the evening. Each one receives according to his receptivity and the state in which he is." (CWM 7: 254–255)

14.

"*On Sundays, when you play, do you decide beforehand from what region the music has to come?*

…

From where does it come?

Before sitting down I don't even know what notes I am going to play. The region? It is always the same region. This is why I can speak with some experience about the origin of Berlioz's music, because it is a region very well known to me, one I frequent assiduously. But I do not at all know what will come. Nothing at all, nothing. I don't even decide what feeling or idea or state of consciousness is going to be expressed, nothing. I am like a blank page. I come and sit down, concentrate for a minute and let it come. Afterwards, sometimes I know, not always. But when I hear it a second time here, in the afternoon or evening, then I know; because it is no longer I, it is something that comes from outside. So then I know quite well what it is like." (CWM 6: 384)

15.

"What is this 'I' that speaks from time to time, perceiving its limitation in the very midst of the consciousness of the infinite? It is the point of concentration where the Will which is beyond becomes individually conscious so that it

can manifest through the terrestrial instrument; in short, it is the individualised intermediary between the instrument and the thought of the worker, a kind of more or less skilled hand.” Prayers and Meditations (CWM 2: 124)

XCI—Earth Is a Concentration of All the Other Worlds

1.

"A long time ago Mother was going everywhere in the subtle body but she found it of a very secondary interest. Our attention must be fixed on the earth because our work is here. Besides, the earth is a concentration of all the other worlds and one can touch them by touching something corresponding in the earth-atmosphere." (CWSA 32: 40)

2.

"I have heard that only on the earth there are psychic beings, precisely because the earth has been created as a symbol for concentrating the problem, and the psychic being, which is the result of the direct intervention of the Supreme, has been created here exactly for the necessities of this symbolic action." (CWM 7: 161–162)

3.

"*Does Brindavan exist anywhere else than on earth?*

The whole earth and everything it contains is a kind of concentration, a condensation of something which exists in other worlds invisible to the material eye. Each thing manifested here has its principle, idea or essence somewhere in the subtler regions. This is an indispensable

condition for the manifestation. And the importance of the manifestation will always depend on the origin of the thing manifested.

In the world of the gods there is an ideal and harmonious Brindavan of which the earthly Brindavan is but a deformation and a caricature.

Those who are developed inwardly, either in their senses or in their minds, perceive these realities which are invisible (to the ordinary man) and receive their inspiration from them.

So the writer or writers of the Bhagavat were certainly in contact with a whole inner world that is well and truly real and existent, where they saw and experienced everything they have described or revealed." (CWM 10: 60)

4.

"But for our part, we are beginning from where he has shown, from the purely intellectual point of view, what the purpose of existence is, and he formulates it like this: 'the central significant motive of the terrestrial existence.' For he is not concerned with the entire universe, he has taken terrestrial life, that is, our life here on Earth, as a symbolic and concentrated representation of the purpose of the entire universe. In fact, according to very old traditions, the Earth, from the deeper spiritual point of view, has been created as a symbolic concentration of universal life so that

the work of transformation may be done more easily, in a limited, concentrated 'space'–so to say—where all the elements of the problem are gathered together so that, in the concentration, the action may be more total and effective. So here he speaks only of terrestrial existence, but we can understand that it is a symbolic existence, that is, that it *represents* a universal action. It is a symbolic, concentrated representation. And he says that "the central motive", that is, the purpose of terrestrial existence is to awaken, to develop and finally to reveal in a total manifestation the Spirit which is hidden at the centre of Matter and impels this Matter *from within* outwards towards a progressive development which will liberate the Spirit working from within." (CWM 9: 210)

5.

"The formation of the earth as we know it, this infinitesimal point in the immense universe, was made precisely in order to concentrate the effort of transformation upon one point; it is like a symbolic point created in the universe to make it possible, while working directly upon one point, to radiate it over the entire universe." (CWM 4: 242)

6.

"So—we have already said this many times, I believe—our earth which from the astronomical point of view seems to be only a small insignificant planet in the midst of all the

stars and all the worlds, our earth has been formed to become the symbol of the universe and the point of concentration for the work of transformation, of divine transmutation.

And because of that, in this Matter which was perhaps the most obscure and most inconscient of all the Matter of the universes, there plunged and incarnated directly the Divine Consciousness, from the supreme Origin right into the obscurest Matter, without going through any intermediate stages, *directly*. Consequently, the two extremes touch, the Supreme and the most inconscient, and the universal circle closes. And so earthly life is the easiest means, one might say, or the most rapid, of becoming conscious of the Divine." (CWM 8: 35–36)

7.

"The universe is an objectivisation of the Supreme, as if He had objectivised himself outside of himself in order to see himself, to live himself, to know himself, and so that there might be an existence and a consciousness capable of recognising him as their origin and uniting consciously with him to manifest him in the becoming. There is no other reason for the universe. The earth is a kind of symbolic crystallisation of universal life, a reduction, a concentration, so that the work of evolution may be easier to do and follow. And if we see the history of the earth, we can understand why the universe has been created. It is

the Supreme growing aware of himself in an eternal Becoming; and the goal is the union of the created with the Creator, a union that is conscious, willing and free, in the Manifestation.

That is the secret of Nature. Nature is the executive Force, it is she who does the work." (CWM 9: 321)

8.

"And from the occult standpoint, earth (which is nothing from the astronomical standpoint; in the immensity of the astronomical skies, earth is a thing absolutely without interest and without importance), but from the occult and spiritual point of view, earth is the concentrated symbol of the universe. For it is much more easy to work on one point than in a diluted vastness. All those who do the work know this. Well, for the convenience and necessity of work, the whole universe has been concentrated and condensed symbolically in a grain of sand which is called Earth. And therefore it is the symbol of everything; all that is to be changed, all that is to be transformed, all that is to be converted is there. This means that if one concentrates on this work and does it there, all the rest will follow automatically, otherwise there will be no end—and no hope." (CWM 5: 274–275)

9.

"For this world of matter is the point of concentration of all the worlds; it is the field of concretisation of all the worlds;

it is the place where all the worlds will have to manifest. At present it is disharmonious and obscure; but that is only an accident, a false start. One day it will become beautiful, rhythmic, full of light; for that is the consummation for which it was made." (CWM 3: 103)

10.

"*But is it true that there is no difference between solar matter and terrestrial matter? Were the sun and the other worlds of the solar system formed at the same time as the earth?*

Necessarily, everything was formed at the same time, the creation was simultaneous, with a special concentration of the Consciousness upon the earth." (CWM 4: 243)

XCII—Other Quotations on Concentration

1.

"The strength of the hand, the weight would not necessarily indicate that it was mine—for it was an experience not of the physical hand or in the physical body, but in the subtle realms of the being and there the Mother's touch and pressure might well be stronger and heavier than mine. The Mother does not remember the date, but one night about that period she was thinking strongly about her and putting a pressure for the removal of some obstacle to a spiritual opening. It is possible that this was what produced the experience. If it was myself, it must have been at a time when I was concentrating and sending the force to different people, but I remember nothing precise. I have often thought of her of course and sent a Force to help her." (CWSA 32: 130)

2.

"The Self is an eternal utter Being and pure existence of which all these things are becomings. From this knowledge we have to proceed; this knowledge we have to realise and make it the foundation of the inner and the outer life of the individual. The Yoga of Knowledge, starting from this primary truth, has conceived a negative and positive method of discipline by which we shall get rid of these false identifications and recoil back from them into true self-

knowledge. The negative method is to say always "I am not the body" so as to contradict and root out the false idea "I am the body", to concentrate on this knowledge and by renunciation of the attachment of the soul to the physical get rid of the body-sense. We say again "I am not the life" and by concentration on this knowledge and renunciation of attachment to the vital movements and desires, get rid of the life-sense. We say, finally, "I am not the mind, the motion, the sense, the thought" and by concentration on this knowledge and renunciation of the mental activities, get rid of the mind-sense. When we thus constantly create a gulf between ourselves and the things with which we identified ourselves, their veils progressively fall away from us and the Self begins to be visible to our experience. Of that then we say "I am That, the pure, the eternal, the self-blissful" and by concentrating our thought and being upon it we become That and are able finally to renounce the individual existence and the Cosmos." (CWSA 23: 338–339)

3.

"It [*the breaking of the veil*] comes of itself with the pressure of the sadhana. It can also be brought about by specific concentration and effort.

It is certainly better if the psychic is conscious and active before there is the removing of the veil or screen between the individual and the universal consciousness

which comes when the inner being is brought forward in all its wideness. For then there is much less danger of the difficulties of what I have called the intermediate zone." (CWSA 30: 307)

4.

"Even in things, even in objects, even in stones, there is a strange receptivity which comes from this Presence. There are stones—if you know how to do it—that can accumulate forces. They can accumulate forces, keep them and transmit them. One can take stones (what are called precious stones) and concentrate forces into them and they keep them. And these forces irradiate slowly, very gradually. But if one knows how to do it one can accumulate such a quantity as would last, so to speak, indefinitely.

Are these forces of any use when they come out from the stones?

Certainly, yes! The stone can preserve the force almost indefinitely. … There are stones which can be used to foretell events. Some people know how to read in these stones events which are going to happen. Stones can carry messages. Naturally, this requires an ability on both sides: on one side, a sufficiently strong power of concentration;

on the other, a power to see and read directly, without using very precise words either." (CWM 5: 228–229)

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.

"To believe [in Divine] is to have the faith that there cannot be a world without the Divine, that the very existence of the world proves the existence of the Divine. And not just a 'belief', not something one has thought out or been taught, nothing like that: faith. A faith that is a living knowledge, not an acquired one, that the existence of the world is enough to prove the Divine. Without the Divine, no world. …

For me it is even stronger than that. I look at a rose, a thing that contains such a concentration of spontaneous beauty—not man-made: spontaneous, a blossoming; one has only to see it to be sure that there is a Divine. It is a

certainty. One cannot... it is impossible not to believe. It is like those people (this is fantastic!), those people who study Nature, really study it thoroughly, how everything functions and is brought about and exists—how can one study sincerely, with attention and care, without being absolutely convinced that the Divine is there?" (CWM 16: 341–342)

7.

"As I told you already World Union is an outward movement for those who need an outward activity and organisation to give a more concrete reality to their faith. It is an ideal activity for those who want to harmonise humanity as it is, in order to make it ready for a future integral progress.

Some others—a few—lay more stress on the inner individual preparation and progress—they are the forerunners who show the way to the world. These must not be pulled out of their concentration and must remain sympathetic witnesses of World Union, but not active participants." (CWM 15: 63–64)

[World Union, founded in November 1958, is a charitable society primarily working for human unity and world peace on a spiritual foundation and is inspired in its work by Sri Aurobindo's book *The Ideal of Human Unity*.]

8.

"*In the expression 'dispersion of the cells', doesn't the word 'dispersion' have a special meaning? If so, what is it?*

I used the word dispersion of the cells in its most concrete sense.

When the concentration which forms the body comes to an end and the body dissolves, all the cells that have been especially developed and have become conscious of the divine Presence within them, are scattered and enter other combinations in which they awaken, by contagion, the consciousness of the Presence that each one has had. And in this way, by this phenomenon of concentration, development and dispersion, all matter evolves and learns by contagion, develops by contagion, has the experience by contagion.

Naturally, the cell dissolves with the body. It is the consciousness of the cells that enters other combinations." (CWM 12: 342)

9.

"But if you were all-powerful, if your will and your vision were all-powerful, there would be no occasion for you to revolt, you would always see that all things are as they should be. If we go to the highest level and unite with the consciousness of the supreme Will, we see, at every second, at every moment of the universe, that all is exactly

as it should be, exactly as the Supreme wills it. That is omnipotence. And all movements of violence become not only unnecessary but utterly ridiculous.

Therefore there is only one solution: to unite ourselves by aspiration, concentration, interiorisation and identification with the supreme Will. And that is both omnipotence and perfect freedom at the same time. And that is the only omnipotence and the only freedom; everything else is an approximation. You may be on the way, but it is not the entire thing. So if you experience this, you realise that with this supreme freedom and supreme power there is also a total peace and a serenity that never fails." (CWM 10: 77)

10.

"The poet seeks solitude with himself or with Nature to listen to his inspiration; the thinker plunges into solitude to meditate on things and commune with a deeper knowledge; the scientist shuts himself up in his laboratory to pore by experiment into the secrets of Nature; these retirements are not grim and inhuman. Neither is the retirement of the sadhak into the exclusive concentration of which he feels the need; it is a means to an end, to the end on which his whole heart is set. As for the Yogin or bhakta who has already begun to have the fundamental experience, he is not in a grim and inhuman solitude. The Divine and all the world are there in the being of the one,

the supreme Beloved or his Ananda is there in the heart of the other." (CWSA 31: 343)

11.

"Authors, writers, who were inspired and serious in their creative work, that is to say, who were concentrated in a kind of consecration of their being to their literary work, form within themselves a sort of mental entity extremely well-constituted and coordinated, having its own life, *independent of the body*, so that when they die, when the body returns to the earth, this mental formation continues to exist altogether autonomously and independently, and as it has been fashioned for expression it always seeks a means of expression somewhere. And if there happens to be a child who has been formed in particularly favourable circumstances—for instance, the mother of this little girl is herself a poetess and a writer; perhaps the mother herself had an aspiration, a wish that her child would be a remarkable, exceptional being—anyway, if the child who is conceived is formed in particularly favourable circumstances, an entity of this kind may enter into the child at the time of birth and try to use him to express itself; and in that case, this gives a maturity to the child's mind, which is quite extraordinary, exceptional and which enables him to do things of the kind we have just read.

We could say, without fear of sounding quite absurd, that if what she has written surprisingly resembles certain

things in Maeterlinck or has the characteristics of his writings, even with certain almost identical turns of phrase, we could very well imagine that a mental formation of Maeterlinck has incarnated in this child and is using this young instrument to express itself.

There are similar examples, for instance, among musicians." (CWM 8: 318)

12.

"And this is true even in the physical field. I don't know if you have observed animals like lions, tigers, elephants, but it is a fact that when they are not in action, they are always so perfectly still. A lion sitting and looking at you always seems to be telling you, 'Oh, how fidgety you are!' It looks at you with such a peaceful air of wisdom! And all its power, energy, physical strength are there, gathered, collected, concentrated and—without a shadow of agitation—ready for action when the order is given.

I have seen people, many people, who could not sit still for half an hour without fidgeting. They had to move a foot or a leg, or an arm or their head; they had to stir restlessly all the time, for they did not have the power or the strength to remain quiet.

This capacity to remain still when one wants to, to gather all one's energies and spend them as one wishes, completely if one wants, or to apportion them as one wants in action, with a perfect calm even in action—that is always

the sign of strength. It may be physical strength or vital strength or mental strength. But if you are in the least agitated, you may be sure there is a weakness somewhere; and if your restlessness is integral, it is an integral weakness." (CWM 8: 329–330)

13.

"And rest. A rest which is not a falling into the inconscient—which generally tires you more than it refreshes—but a conscious rest, a concentration in which one opens oneself and absorbs the forces which come, the universal forces." (CWM 8: 195)

14.

"Yes, of course, there is always a fight between the forces of Light and Darkness.

In sadhana it becomes concentrated and conscious to us.

As for the hostile beings, they are always in battle with each other; but they make common cause against the Truth and Light." (CWSA 31: 758)

15.

"Our sense by its incapacity has invented darkness. In truth there is nothing but Light, only it is a power of light either above or below our poor human vision's limited range.

For do not imagine that light is created by the Suns. The Suns are only physical concentrations of Light, but the splendour they concentrate for us is self-born and everywhere.

God is everywhere and wherever God is, there is Light. Jnanam chaitanyam jyotir Brahma." (CWSA 12: 188)

16.

"There must be no tamasic (inert, passive) surrender to the Mother—for that will bring as its reaction a passive inert helplessness before the lower or hostile forces or suggestions, an unresisting or helplessly resisting acquiescence or sufferance of these inroads. A passive condition can bring much peace, quietude, joy even, but it disperses the being instead of concentrating it in wideness and the will becomes atrophied [shrunken]. Surrender must be luminous, active, a willed offering to the Mother and reception of her Force and support to its workings, at the same time a strong vigilant will to reject all that is not hers. Too many sadhaks cry before the attacks of their lower nature, "I am helpless, I cannot react, it comes and makes me do what it wants." This is a wrong passivity." (CWSA 29: 79–80)

17.

"The soul which has risen to the divine Samadhi participates in the measure of its attainment in this reversed condition of things,— the true condition, for that

which is the reverse of our mentality is the truth. It is for this reason that, as is said in the ancient books, the man who has arrived at Self-possession attains spontaneously without the need of concentration in thought and effort the knowledge or the result which the Idea or the Will in him moves out to embrace." (CWSA 23: 322)

18.

"The process of Yoga is a turning of the human soul from the egoistic state of consciousness absorbed in the outward appearances and attractions of things to a higher state in which the Transcendent and Universal can pour itself into the individual mould and transform it. The first determining element of the siddhi is, therefore, the intensity of the turning, the force which directs the soul inward. The power of aspiration of the heart, the force of the will, the concentration of the mind, the perseverance and determination of the applied energy are the measure of that intensity. The ideal sadhaka should be able to say in the Biblical phrase, 'My zeal for the Lord has eaten me up.' It is this zeal for the Lord,—*utsāha*, the zeal of the whole nature for its divine results, *vyākulatā,* the heart's eagerness for the attainment of the Divine,—that devours the ego and breaks up the limitations of its petty and narrow mould for the full and wide reception of that which it seeks, that which, being universal, exceeds and, being

transcendent, surpasses even the largest and highest individual self and nature." (CWSA 23: 58)

19.

"This preliminary is of supreme importance; without it the course of the rest of the Rajayoga is likely to be troubled, marred and full of unexpected mental, moral and physical perils. This moral purification is divided in the established system under two heads, five *yamas* and five *niyamas*. The first are rules of moral self-control in conduct such as truth-speaking, abstinence from injury or killing, from theft etc.; but in reality these must be regarded as merely certain main indications of the general need of moral self-control and purity. *Yama* is, more largely, any self-discipline by which the rajasic egoism and its passions and desires in the human being are conquered and quieted into perfect cessation. The object is to create a moral calm, a void of the passions, and so prepare for the death of egoism in the rajasic human being. The *niyamas* are equally a discipline of the mind by regular practices of which the highest is meditation on the divine Being, and their object is to create a sattwic calm, purity and preparation for concentration upon which the secure pursuance of the rest of the Yoga can be founded." (CWSA 24: 539)

20.

"We may hear clear and luminous teachings about the Self from philosophers or teachers or from ancient writings; we may by thought, inference, imagination, analogy or by any other available means attempt to form a mental figure or conception of it; we may hold firmly that conception in our mind and fix it by an entire and exclusive concentration; [This is the idea of the triple operation of Jnanayoga, *śravaṇa*, *manana*, *nididhyāsana*, hearing, thinking or mentalising and fixing in concentration.] but we have not yet realised it, we have not seen God. It is only when after long and persistent concentration or by other means the veil of the mind is rent or swept aside, only when a flood of light breaks over the awakened mentality, *jyotirmaya brahman*, and conception gives place to a knowledge-vision in which the Self is as present, real, concrete as a physical object to the physical eye, that we possess in knowledge; for we have seen. After that revelation, whatever fadings of the light, whatever periods of darkness may afflict the soul, it can never irretrievably lose what it has once held. The experience is inevitably renewed and must become more frequent till it is constant; when and how soon depends on the devotion and persistence with which we insist on the path and besiege by our will or our love the hidden Deity." (CWSA 23: 305)

21.

"Still, the Self goes on with its imperishable aspect of immanence, its immutable aspect of divine envelopment, its endless trick of becoming each thing and all things; our detection of the cheat and our withdrawal do not seem to affect one tittle either the Self or the universe. Must we not then know also what it is that thus persists superior to our acceptance and rejection and too great, too eternal to be affected by it? Here too there must be some invincible reality at work and the integrality of Knowledge demands that we shall see and realise it; otherwise it may prove that our own knowledge and not the Lord in the universe was the cheat and the illusion. Therefore we must concentrate again and see and realise also this which persists so sovereignly and must know the Self as no other than the Supreme Soul which is the Lord of Nature, the upholder of cosmic existence by whose sanction it proceeds, whose will compels its multitudinous actions and determines its perpetual cycles. And we must yet concentrate once again and see and realise and must know the Self as the one Existence who is both the Soul of all and the Nature of all, at once Purusha and Prakriti and so able both to express himself in all these forms of things ..." (CWSA 23: 340)

22.

"We must recognise that our primary aim in knowledge must be to realise our own supreme Self more than that Self in others or as the Lord of Nature or as the All; for that

is the pressing need of the individual, to arrive at the highest truth of his own being, to set right its disorders, confusions, false identifications, to arrive at its right concentration and purity and to know and mount to its source. But we do this not in order to disappear into its source, but so that our whole existence and all the members of this inner kingdom may find their right basis, may live in our highest self, live for our highest self only and obey no other law than that which proceeds from our highest self and is given to our purified being without any falsification in the transmitting mentality. And if we do this rightly we shall discover that in finding this supreme Self we have found the one Self in all, the one Lord of our nature and of all Nature, the All of ourselves who is the All of the universe." (CWSA 23: 342)

23.

"But in the first place, if we have proceeded rightly on the path of our Yoga, we shall have attained to Self through a purified mind and heart, and a purified mind is one that is necessarily passive and open to the knowledge. Secondly, even the mind in spite of its tendency to limit and divide can be taught to think in the rhythm of the unifying Truth instead of the broken terms of the limiting appearance. We must therefore accustom it by meditation and concentration to cease to think of things and beings as separately existent in themselves and rather to think

always of the One everywhere and of all things as the One. Although we have spoken hitherto of the withdrawing motion of the Jiva as the first necessity of knowledge and as if it were to be pursued alone and by itself, yet in fact it is better for the sadhaka of the integral Yoga to unite the two movements." (CWSA 23: 370)

24.

"There is this great, boundless, unconditioned consciousness and force; but our consciousness and force stands apart from it, even if within it, limited, petty, discouraged, disgusted with itself and the world, but unable to participate in that higher thing which it has seen. There is this immeasurable and unstained bliss; but our own being remains the sport of a lower Nature of pleasure and pain and dull neutral sensation incapable of its divine delight. There is this perfect Knowledge and Will; but our own remains always the mental deformed knowledge and limping will incapable of sharing in or even being in tune with that nature of Godhead. Or else so long as we live purely in an ecstatic contemplation of that vision, we are delivered from ourselves; but the moment we again turn our consciousness upon our own being, we fall away from it and it disappears or becomes remote and intangible. The Divinity leaves us; the Vision vanishes; we are back again in the pettiness of our mortal existence.

Somehow this chasm has to be bridged. And here there are two possibilities for the mental being. One possibility is for it to rise by a great, prolonged, concentrated, all-forgetting effort out of itself into the Supreme. But in this effort the mind has to leave its own consciousness, to disappear into another and temporarily or permanently lose itself, if not quite abolish. It has to go into the trance of Samadhi. For this reason the Raja and other systems of Yoga give a supreme importance to the state of Samadhi or Yogic trance in which the mind withdraws not only from its ordinary interests and preoccupations, but first from all consciousness of outward act and sense and being and then from all consciousness of inward mental activities." (CWSA 23: 394–395)

25.

"In Hathayoga the instrument is the body and life. All the power of the body is stilled, collected, purified, heightened, concentrated to its utmost limits or beyond any limits by Asana and other physical processes; the power of the life too is similarly purified, heightened, concentrated by Asana and Pranayama. This concentration of powers is then directed towards that physical centre in which the divine consciousness sits concealed in the human body. The power of Life, Nature-power, coiled up with all its secret forces asleep in the lowest nervous plexus of the earth-being,—for only so much escapes into waking action in our

normal operations as is sufficient for the limited uses of human life,—rises awakened through centre after centre and awakens, too, in its ascent and passage the forces of each successive nodus of our being, the nervous life, the heart of emotion and ordinary mentality, the speech, sight, will, the higher knowledge, till through and above the brain it meets with and it becomes one with the divine consciousness." (CWSA 24: 609)

26.

"The triple way takes for its chosen instruments the three main powers of the mental soul-life of the human being. Knowledge selects the reason and the mental vision and it makes them by purification, concentration and a certain discipline of a God-directed seeking its means for the greatest knowledge and the greatest vision of all, God-knowledge and God-vision. Its aim is to see, know and be the Divine. Works, action selects for its instrument the will of the doer of works; it makes life an offering of sacrifice to the Godhead and by purification, concentration and a certain discipline of subjection to the divine Will a means for contact and increasing unity of the soul of man with the divine Master of the universe. Devotion selects the emotional and aesthetic powers of the soul and by turning them all Godward in a perfect purity, intensity, infinite passion of seeking makes them a means of God-possession in one or many relations of unity with the Divine Being. All

aim in their own way at a union or unity of the human soul with the supreme Spirit." (CWSA 24: 610)

27.

"But all power is in the end one, all power is really soul-power. In the ordinary process of life, body and mind this truth is quite obscured by the dispersed, dividing and distributive action of Nature which is the normal condition of all our functionings, although even there it is in the end evident; for all material energy contains hidden the vital, mental, psychic, spiritual energy and in the end it must release these forms of the one Shakti, the vital energy conceals and liberates into action all the other forms, the mental supporting itself on the life and body and their powers and functionings contains undeveloped or only partially developed the psychic and the spiritual power of the being. But when by Yoga any of these powers is taken up from the dispersed and distributive action, raised to its highest degree, concentrated, it becomes manifest soul-power and reveals the essential unity. Therefore the Hathayogic process has too its pure psychic and spiritual result, the Rajayogic arrives by psychic means at a spiritual consummation. The triple way may appear to be altogether mental and spiritual in its way of seeking and its objectives, but it can be attended by results more characteristic of the other paths, which offer themselves in a spontaneous and involuntary flowering, and for the same reason, because

soul-power is all-power and where it reaches its height in one direction its other possibilities also begin to show themselves in fact or in incipient potentiality. This unity at once suggests the possibility of a synthetic Yoga." (CWSA 24: 611)

28.

"We replace the inferior action of the limited, ignorant and imperfect personal will and energy in us by the action of the divine Shakti. To open ourselves to the universal energy is always possible to us, because that is all around us and always flowing into us, it is that which supports and supplies all our inner and outer action and in fact we have no power of our own in any separately individual sense, but only a personal formulation of the one Shakti. And on the other hand this universal Shakti is within ourselves, concentrated in us, for the whole power of it is present in each individual as in the universe, and there are means and processes by which we can awaken its greater and potentially infinite force and liberate it to its larger workings." (CWSA 24: 755)

29.

"On the other hand, the unitarian consciousness or indivisible Unity cannot be that impossible entity, a thing without contents out of which all contents have issued and into which they disappear and become annihilated. It must

be an original self-concentration in which all is contained but in another manner than in this temporal and spatial manifestation. That which has thus concentrated itself, is the utterly ineffable and inconceivable Existence which the Nihilist images to his mind as the negative Void of all that we know and are but the Transcendentalist with equal reason may image to his mind as the positive but indistinguishable Reality of all that we know and are. 'In the beginning,' says the Vedanta, 'was the one Existence without a second,' but before and after the beginning, now, for ever and beyond Time is that which we cannot describe even as the One, even when we say that nothing but That is. What we can be aware of is, first, its original self-concentration which we endeavour to realise as the indivisible One; secondly, the diffusion and apparent disintegration of all that was concentrated in its unity which is the Mind's conception of the universe; and thirdly, its firm self-extension in the Truth-consciousness which contains and upholds the diffusion and prevents it from being a real disintegration, maintains unity in utmost diversity and stability in utmost mutability, insists on harmony in the appearance of an all-pervading strife and collision, keeps eternal cosmos where Mind would arrive only at a chaos eternally attempting to form itself." (CWSA 21: 136–137)

30.

"The lid thins, is slit, breaks as under or opens and disappears under the pressure of the psycho-spiritual change and the natural urge of the new spiritualised consciousness towards that of which it is an expression here. This effectuation of an aperture and its consequences may not at all take place if there is only a partial psychic emergence satisfied with the experience of the Divine Reality in the normal degrees of the spiritualised mind: but if there is any awakening to the existence of these higher supernormal levels, then an aspiration towards them may break the lid or operate a rift in it. This may happen long before the psycho-spiritual change is complete or even before it has well begun or proceeded far, because the psychic personality has become aware and has an eager concentration towards the superconscience." (CWSA 22: 944)

31.

"The Purusha is one thing and the ordinary mental will and force are another. The latter may be unsuccessful in their action. When you are in the Purusha consciousness, that of itself implies a state of concentration and receptivity." (CWSA 28: 40)

32.

"A vital so ready to despair that even after a 'glorious' flood of poetry, it uses the occasion to preach the gospel of

despair. I have passed through most of the difficulties of the sadhak, but I cannot recollect to have looked on delight of poetical creation or concentration in it as something undivine and a cause for despair. This seems to me excessive." (CWSA 31: 196–197)

33.

"If *X* has allowed any fall in her consciousness and action which retards her sadhana and is not yet able wholly to overcome her weakness, that is no reason why you should allow *her* difficulty to overcome *your* faith and endeavour. There is no natural connection between the two and no reason why there should be —it is only your mind that is making one. Each sadhak has his own separate sadhana, his own difficulties, his own way to follow. His sadhana is between him and the Divine; no one else has a part in it. Nor is there any reason why, even if one falls or fails, the other should torment himself for that, lose his faith and abandon his way. *X*'s struggle, whatever its nature or limits, is her own and concerns herself and the Mother. It is not yours and ought not to touch or concern you at all; if you allow it to touch and shake you because she happens to be your sister, you bring in an unnecessary difficulty to add to your own and hamper your own progress. Keep to your own path, concentrate on your own obstacles to overcome them. As for her, you can at most pray to the

Divine Power to help her and leave it there." (CWSA 31: 630)

34.

"*Y* probably referred to an experience in which the Mother being in Algeria appeared to a circle of friends sitting in Paris and took up a pencil and wrote a few words on a paper. Having satisfied herself that it was possible she did not develop it any farther. That was at a time when she was practising occultism with Théon in Algeria. Materialisation is possible but it does not happen easily—it demands a very rare and difficult concentration of forces or else an occult process with vital beings behind it such as materialises objects, like the stones that were daily thrown in the Guest House when we were there. In neither case it is a miracle. But to do as you suggest, make it a common or everyday phenomenon, would be hardly practicable and spiritually not useful, as it is not a spiritual force which gives the power but an occult mental-vital force. It would turn the Yoga into a display of occultism, rather than a process of spiritual change." (CWSA 32: 37–38)

35.

"The difficulty our correspondent finds is in an apparent conflict of authorities, as sometimes meditation is recommended in the form of a concentrated succession of thoughts on a single subject, sometimes in the exclusive concentration of the mind on a single image, word or idea,

a fixed contemplation rather than meditation. The choice between these two methods and others, for there are others, depends on the object we have in view in Yoga." (CWSA 13: 445)

36.

"For all things seek to concentrate our view on the temporal interests, conceptions and realisations of our humanity. We have to look beyond them to know that which they serve and represent. Nothing in the world can be understood by itself, but only by that which is beyond it. If we would know all, we must turn our gaze to that which is beyond all. That being known all else is comprehended." (CWSA 12: 142)

37.

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

38.

"You have to be always concentrated, always referring all difficulties for solution to the force that is being sent from here, always letting it act and not substituting your own mind and separate vital will or impulse." (CWSA 29: 243)

"A certain plasticity in the physical consciousness which is sure to come makes it easy to turn from one concentration to another." (CWSA 29: 258)

39.

"It [*meditative absorption during work*] depends on the plasticity of the consciousness. Some are like that, they get so absorbed they don't want to come out or do anything else. One has to keep a certain balance by which the fundamental consciousness remains able to turn from one concentration to another with ease." (CWSA 29: 258)

40.

"There are two different states, that which the consciousness takes in concentration and that which it takes in relaxation—the latter is the ordinary consciousness (ordinary for the sadhak, though not perhaps the ordinary consciousness of the average man), the former is what he is attaining to by tapas of concentration in sadhana. To go into the Akshara and witness experiences from there is easy for the sadhak who has got so far. He can also concentrate and maintain the unification of the main aspects of his being, although with more difficulty—but a relaxation there brings him back to the relaxed 'ordinary' consciousness. It is only when what is gained by sadhana becomes normal to the ordinary consciousness that this can be avoided. In proportion as this is done, it becomes

possible not only to experience the truth subjectively, but make it manifest in action." (CWSA 29: 316)

41.

"Naturally, whatever name one concentrates on [*while awake*] will repeat itself [*in sleep],* if any does. But the calling of Mother in sleep is not necessarily a repetition—it is the inner being that often calls to her in difficulty or in need." (CWSA 29: 327)

42.

"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)

43.

"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)

44.

"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)

"Atman, our true self, is Brahman; it is pure indivisible Being, self luminous, self-concentrated in consciousness, self-concentrated in force, self-delighted. Its existence is light and bliss. It is timeless, spaceless and free." (CWSA 17: 31)

45.

"There are, says the Gita, two types of intelligence in the human being. The first is concentrated, poised, one, homogeneous, directed singly towards the Truth; unity is its characteristic, concentrated fixity is its very being. In the other there is no single will, no unified intelligence, but only an endless number of ideas many-branching, coursing about, that is to say, in this or that direction in pursuit of the desires which are offered to it by life and by the environment." (CWSA 19: 95)

46.

"The unified intelligent will is fixed in the enlightened soul, it is concentrated in inner self-knowledge; the many-branching and multifarious, busied with many things, careless of the one thing needful is on the contrary subject to the restless and discursive action of the mind, dispersed in outward life and works and their fruits." (CWSA 19: 96)

47.

"*Instead, I find that there is an active concentration. I often feel a pressure in the heart-centre. But why can't there be a little happiness and love too?*

The experience is only one of an awakening of consciousness." (CWM 17: 88)

48.

"*I feel that it is necessary to go into solitude—I am living only in my outer being.*

Certainly you are living mainly in your mind, vital and physical. A little concentration would do you no harm, but you must not overdo it." (CWM 17: 99)

49.

"*There is something I have often wondered about: when one prays to the Lord, when one wants to make Him*

understand that something is wrong, I always have the impression that one must concentrate very hard and that after all one is calling to something far away. Is that right? Or is it really...

That depends on us!

Now I can feel Him everywhere, all the time, all the time... even a physical contact—it is subtle physical, but physical—in things, in the air, in people, in... like this. (*Mother presses her hands to her face*.) And then, it is not far to go, all I have to do is this (*Mother turns her hands slightly inwards*), one second of concentration—He is there! He is there, He is everywhere. He is far away only when we think He is far away." (CWM 10: 152)

50.

"Each morning when you get up, before you begin your day, with love and admiration and gratefulness hail this great family, these saviours of mankind who, ever the same, have come, come and will come until the end of time, as guides and instructors, as humble and marvellous servants of their brothers, in order to help them to scale the steep slope of perfection. Thus when you wake up, concentrate on them your thought full of trust and gratitude and you will soon experience the beneficial effects of this concentration. You will feel their presence responding to your call, you will be surrounded, imbued

with their light and love. Then the daily effort to understand a little better, to love a little more, to serve more, will be more fruitful and easier at the same time. The help you give to others will become more effective and your heart will be filled with an unwavering joy." (CWM 2: 115–116)

51.

"Actually, in human life, the whole moral problem is concentrated in the conflict between the vital will with its impulses and the mental power with its decrees. When the vital will is submitted to the mental power, then the life of the individual or of the society becomes moral." (CWM 2: 166–167)

52.

"Painters have to follow a discipline for the growth of the consciousness of their eyes, which in itself is almost a Yoga. If they are true artists and try to see beyond and use their art for the expression of the inner world, they grow in consciousness by this concentration, which is not other than the consciousness given by Yoga. Why then should not Yogic consciousness be a help to artistic creation? I have known some who had very little training and skill and yet through Yoga acquired a fine capacity in writing and painting." (CWM 3: 105)

53.

"Both [generous man and miser] are important, both needed in the entire plan; the movement that stores up and concentrates is no less needed than the movement that spreads and diffuses. Both, if truly surrendered to the Divine, will be utilised as instruments for its divine work to the same degree and with an equal value. But when they are not surrendered both are alike moved by impulses of ignorance." (CWM 3: 119–120)

54.

"This insistence on the exclusive reality of the physical world, of physical pleasures, physical joys, physical possessions, is the result of the whole materialistic tendency of human civilisation. It was unthinkable in ancient times. On the contrary, withdrawal, concentration, liberation from all material cares, consecration to the spiritual joy, that was happiness indeed." (CWM 3: 203)

55.

"Certainly there is a moment in the course of the inner growth when far from having to make an effort to concentrate, to become absorbed in the contemplation and the seeking of the truth and its best expression—what the Buddhists call meditation— you feel, on the contrary, a kind of relief, ease, rest, joy, and to have to come out of that in order to deal with things that are not essential,

everything that may seem like a waste of time, becomes terribly painful. External activities get reduced to what is absolutely necessary, to those that are done as service to the Divine." (CWM 3: 209)

56.

"The artists, whose whole will was free to concentrate upon their art, had only one desire: to manifest beauty, each according to his own highest conception." (CWM 2: 8)

57.

"If then we concentrate sufficiently, if we become conscious of our inmost being, we shall come into contact, within it and through it, with the free universal intelligence, the world of ideas." (CWM 2: 84)

58.

"The only way to become a conscious being, to be oneself, is to unite with the divine Self that is in all. For that, we must, by the aid of concentration, isolate ourselves from external influences." (CWM 2: 107)

59.

"The movement that stores up and concentrates is no less needed than the movement that spreads and diffuses." (CWM 14: 50)

60.

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

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

61.

"At the other extreme of consciousness stands the Buddha with his pure and sublime compassion. For him the suffering arising out of life could only be abolished by the abolition of life; for life and the world are the outcome of the desire to be, the fruit of ignorance. Abolish desire, eliminate ignorance, and the world will disappear and with it all suffering and misery. In a great effort of spiritual aspiration and silent concentration he elaborated his discipline, one of the most uplifting and the most effective disciplines ever given to those who are eager for liberation." (CWM 12: 96)

62.

"*The difficulty is not really to renounce, but to accept (*Mother smiles) *when we see life as it is now.... But then, if we accept, how can we live in the midst of all this and have this 'untroubled rapture'—not there, but here?*

This has been my problem for weeks.

I have come to this conclusion: in principle, it is the consciousness and the union with the Divine that bring rapture—this is the principle—therefore, the consciousness and the union with the Divine, whether in the world as it is or in the construction of a future world, must be the same—in principle. That is what I repeat to myself all the time: 'How is it that you do not have this rapture?'

I have it—when the whole consciousness is centralised in union; at any time, in the midst of anything, with this movement of concentration of the consciousness on union, the rapture comes. But I must say that it disappears when I am working.... It is a world—a very chaotic world of work, where I act on everything around me; and necessarily, I am obliged to receive what is around me, so as to be able to act on it. I have reached a state in which all that I receive, even the things that are considered most painful, leave me absolutely calm and indifferent—'indifferent', not an inactive indifference: without any painful reaction of any kind, absolutely neutral (*gesture turned towards the Eternal*), with perfect equality. But in this equality there is a precise knowledge of what is to be done, of what is to be said, of what is to be written, of what is to be decided, in short, everything that action entails. All that happens in a state of perfect neutrality, with the sense of Power at the same time: the Power flows, the Power acts, and the neutrality remains—but there is no

rapture. I do not have the enthusiasm, the delight, the fullness of action." (CWM 10: 172–173)

63.

"From a higher standpoint, this could be put in another way: it is this action, this luminous and liberating influence that is known as 'spirit'. All that opens to us the road to the supreme realities, pulls us out from the mud of the Ignorance in which we are stuck, opens the doors to us, shows us the path, leads us to where we have to go—this is what man has called 'spirit'. It is the atmosphere created by the Divine Grace in the universe to save it from the darkness into which it has fallen.

The soul is a kind of individual concentration of this Grace, its individual representative in the human being. The soul is something particular to humanity, it exists only in man. It is like a particular expression of the spirit in the human being. The beings of the other worlds do not have a soul, but they can live in the spirit. One might say that the soul is a delegation of the spirit in mankind, a special help to lead it faster. It is the soul that makes individual progress possible. The spirit, in its original form, has a more general, more collective action.

For the moment the spirit plays the part of a helper and guide, but it is not the all-powerful master of the material manifestation; when the Supermind is organised into a new world, the spirit will become the master and

govern Nature in a clear and visible way." (CWM 9: 429–430)

64.

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

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

But it was not because of the star! It was because that dominated my whole consciousness and I was thinking of nothing but that, I wanted only that, thought only of that, acted only for that. So, this thing which generally takes a whole lifetime-–t is said the minimum time is thirty-five years!–before twelve months had passed, it was done.

But that was because I thought only of that.

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

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

65.

"There are people who, on the contrary, are extremely concentrated during periods of assimilation, shut up in themselves... Not necessarily! Usually one is more dispersed in periods of activity—not in periods of aspiration—I am speaking of ordinary activity." (CWM 7: 252)

66.

"Sweet Mother, what is 'an all-receiving concentration that is the very nature of the integral Yoga'?

An all-receiving concentration?

No—a concentration which is open to all that exists; it is a concentration which does not oppose anything. It is a concentration which is open. It means that one must not reject certain things from himself and practise an exclusive concentration on a particular point while neglecting all the others. All the possibilities should be admitted and pursued." (CWM 7: 417)

67.

"You connect three or four words and then launch an idea.... I answer, because I think there will always be someone... that it could drop into a brain somewhere; but otherwise, most of the time, the head is not ready to understand even what I say. You must think well and be

well concentrated and see very clearly what you want to ask before asking. Otherwise, it is not the part of the mind which can understand that asks. It is just a surface which is in a perpetual movement of words linking up more or less aptly, coming and going and passing on, and it is this which speaks, it's this which asks and this, indeed, cannot understand." (CWM 6: 200)

68.

"But I say, moreover, what truth is found behind generosity: it is the movement of the spreading forces. But in order that these forces may spread, they must first become concentrated. So there is a sort of movement of pulsation: the forces are concentrated, then they spread, and then they are again concentrated and again spread.... But if you always want to spread out without ever concentrating, after a certain time you have nothing left to spread. For the forces—all forces—it is the same thing." (CWM 5: 356)

69.

"You know, when you sleep, the inner beings are not concentrated upon the body, they go out and become more or less independent—a limited independence, but independence all the same—and they go to live in their own domains. The mind more so, for it is hardly held within the body, it is only concentrated but not contained in the

body. The vital also goes beyond the body, but it is more concentrated upon the body. The mind however is such a supple substance that it is sufficient to think about a person in order to be with that person, at least partially, mentally." (CWM 4: 193)

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