WORK IN SADHANA

Second Edition



THE COMPILATION FROM THE WORKS 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

Work in Sadhana

Second Edition

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Vijaybhai's Note on Comprehensive Compilation

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

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

In this regard the Mother has said,

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

On another occasion She said:

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

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

(CWM 16: 309–310)

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

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

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

(CWSA 29: 87)

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

Vijay

Preface

In the series of comprehensive compilations, we present the importance and role of 'work' in sadhana in this book, *Work in Sadhana*. This book is the first book on the topic of Work.

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

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

The purpose of this comprehensive compilation is to help the reader gain an understanding about the importance and role of work in sadhana. 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—Work in Sadhana Means

1.

"I have always said that work done as sadhana—done, that is to say, as an out flow of energy from the Divine offered to the Divine or work done for the sake of the Divine or work done in a spirit of devotion—is a powerful means of sadhana and that such work is especially necessary in this Yoga. Work, bhakti and meditation are three supports of Yoga. One can do with all three, or two or one. There are people who can't meditate in the set way that one calls meditation, but they progress through work or through bhakti or through the two together. By work and bhakti one can develop a consciousness in which eventually a natural meditation and realisation become possible." (CWSA 29: 209)

2.

"I mean by work action done for the Divine and more and more in union with the Divine—for the Divine alone and nothing else. Naturally that is not easy at the beginning, any more than deep meditation and luminous knowledge are easy or even true love and bhakti are easy. But like the others it has to be begun in the right spirit and attitude, with the right will in you, then all the rest will come.

Works done in this spirit are quite as effective as bhakti or contemplation." (CWSA 29: 217–218)

3.

"I trust you fully and know you are capable of fulfilling quite well your responsibilities. As for the difficulties and deficiencies, everybody has some and one is here to overcome them. This is the meaning of the sadhana of works. Go on courageously with your duties, keeping all faith in the Divine and relying only on the Divine's help and grace." (CWM 14: 316)

4.

"Green is a vital energy of work and action." (CWSA 30: 132)

5.

"*I saw Sri Aurobindo last night in a vision seated on a chair and writing something. Behind his head there was a circular green light. What does this mean?*

The green light is that of a dynamic vital energy (of work). As I was writing—at work—it is natural that that light should be behind my head." (CWSA 35: 518)

6.

"Journeying on a horse or in a conveyance, if symbolic, means a progress or a movement in life, work or sadhana." (CWSA 30: 162)

II—What Isn’t Work in Sadhana

1.

“I do not mean by work action done in the ego and the ignorance, for the satisfaction of the ego and in the drive of rajasic desire. There can be no Karmayoga without the will to get rid of ego, rajas and desire, which are the seals of ignorance.

I do not mean philanthropy or the service of humanity or all the rest of the things—moral or idealistic—which the mind of man substitutes for the deeper truth of works.” (CWSA 29: 216–217)

III—Action by Itself Is Not Yogic

1.

"It is the spirit and the consciousness in which it is done that makes an action Yogic—it is not the action itself." (CWSA 29: 232)

2.

"Work alone is not the object; work is a means of sadhana." (CWSA 29: 231)

IV—Ordinary and Yogic Motives of Work

1.

"The difficulties will disappear when you have succeeded in consecrating yourself and your work and business entirely and without any internal division to the Divine.

Men usually work and carry on their affairs from the ordinary motives of the vital being, need, desire of wealth or success or position or power or fame or the push to activity and the pleasure of manifesting their capacities, and they succeed or fail according to their capability, power of work and the good or bad fortune which is the result of their nature and their Karma. When one takes up the Yoga and wishes to consecrate one's life to the Divine, these ordinary motives of the vital being have no longer their full and free play; they have to be replaced by another, a mainly psychic and spiritual motive, which will enable the sadhak to work with the same force as before, no longer for himself, but for the Divine. If the ordinary vital motives or vital force can no longer act freely and yet are not replaced by something else, then the push or force put into the work may decline or the power to command success may no longer be there. For the sincere sadhak the difficulty can only be temporary; but he has to see the defect in his consecration or his attitude and to remove it. Then the divine Power itself will act through him and use his capacity and vital force for its ends. In your case it is

the psychic being and a part of the mind that have drawn you to the Yoga and were predisposed to it, but the vital nature or at least a large part of it has not yet put itself into line with the psychic movement. There is not as yet the full and undivided consecration of the active vital nature." (CWSA 29: 233)

2.

"Now that you are about to take your first steps on the path of action, it is time to decide whether you will consecrate your life to your own personal interest or whether you will make an offering of it for the accomplishment of the work.

In either case the field of action remains the same. But the spirit in which it is done is totally different." (CWM 14: 301)

V—Work Is a Field of Experience Used for the Sadhana

1.

"Work can be of two kinds—the work that is a field of experience used for the sadhana, for a progressive harmonisation and transformation of the being and its activities, and work that is a realised expression of the Divine. But the time for the latter can be only when the Realisation has been fully brought down into the earth-consciousness; till then all work must be a field of endeavour and a school of experience." (CWSA 29: 216)

2.

" *'All work' is 'a school of experience'?*

Yes, surely. You don't understand? No, Mother. If you don't do anything, you cannot have any experience. The whole life is a field of experience. Each movement you make, each thought you have, each work you do, can be an experience, and must be an experience; and naturally work in particular is a field of experience where one must apply all the progress which one endeavours to make inwardly.

If you remain in meditation or contemplation without working, well, you don't know if you have progressed or not. You may live in an illusion, the illusion of your progress; while if you begin to work, all the circumstances

of your work, the contact with others, the material occupation, all this is a field of experience in order that you may become aware not only of the progress made but of all the progress that remains to be made. If you live closed up in yourself, without acting, you may live in a completely subjective illusion; the moment you externalise your action and enter into contact with others, with circumstances and the objects of life, you become aware absolutely objectively of whether you have made progress or not, whether you are more calm, more conscious, stronger, more unselfish, whether you no longer have any desire, any preference, any weakness, any unfaithfulness—you can become aware of all this by working. But if you remain enclosed in a meditation that's altogether personal, you may enter into a total illusion and never come out of it, and believe that you have realised extraordinary things, while really you have only the impression, the illusion that you have done so.

That's what Sri Aurobindo means." (CWM 7: 287–288)

VI—Sadhana at Home and in the Midst of Your Work

1.

"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)

VII—Work Is a Means of Preparation and a Means of Growing into Inner Consciousness

1.

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

2.

"If he wants to make himself some day fit for the spiritual life, the first thing to be avoided is vital restlessness. To do the work one has to do with a quiet mind, making an offering of it to the Divine and trying to get rid of egoism and vital desire, is the best way to prepare oneself." (CWSA 31: 132)

VIII—Work Is Sadhana If Done with the Right Attitude

1.

"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.

...

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)

2.

"Certainly; work done in the right way and with the consciousness open to the Force is sadhana." (CWSA 29: 231)

3.

"Without sadhana the object of Yoga cannot be attained. Work itself must be taken as part of sadhana. But naturally when you are working, you must think of the work, which

you will learn to do from the Yogic consciousness as an instrument and with the memory of the Divine." (CWSA 29: 231)

4.

"By disinterested work is usually meant work done for the sake of the work or for the sake of others without asking for return, reward or personal fruit or recompense; but in Yoga it means desireless work done for the Divine as an offering without condition or claim—only because it is the Divine's Will or out of love for the Divine." (CWSA 29: 231)

5.

"It is not at all a question of usefulness—although your work is very useful when you put yourself into it. Work is part of the sadhana, and in sadhana the question of usefulness does not arise, that is an outward practical measure of things, though even in the outward ordinary life utility is not the only measure. The question is of aspiration to the Divine, whether that is your central aim in life, your inner need or not. Sadhana for oneself is another matter—one can take it up or leave it. The real sadhana is for the Divine—it is the soul's need and one cannot give it up even if in moments of despondency one thinks one can." (CWSA 29: 240)

6.

"Another good result is the fading out of the feeling that 'the work is mine' and the power to do it with the outward consciousness not engaging the inner being." (CWSA 30: 225)

7.

"There are those who have done the lawyer's work with the Mother's force working in them and grown by it in inward consciousness. On the other hand religious work can be merely external and vital in its nature or influence." (CWSA 29: 248)

8.

"Of course all work helps provided it is done in the right spirit." (CWSA 29: 218)

9.

"There is no opposition between work and sadhana. Work itself done in the right spirit is sadhana. Meditation is not the only means of sadhana. Work is one means; love and worship and surrender are another." (CWSA 29: 209)

10.

"I make no difference between work and yoga. Work itself is yoga if it is done in a spirit of dedication and surrender." (CWM 14: 298)

11.

"It is not so easy to do work. In true work you have to do all that is done in Sadhana and much more." (CWM 14: 300)

12.

"*First of all I must know if this work can be a means of my coming a little closer to You.*

It is not the work, any work, in itself which can bring you close to me. It is the spirit in which it is done that is important." (CWM 16: 179)

13.

"Work done in the right spirit will itself become a means of the inner siddhi." (CWSA 36: 190)

[From IX to XXXI are important parts of Work done with right attitude. — Compiler]

IX—Work Offered as a Sacrifice Becomes a Sadhana

1.

"In the spiritual sense, however, sacrifice has a different meaning—it does not so much indicate giving up what is held dear as an offering of oneself, one's being, one's mind, heart, will, body, life, actions to the Divine. It has the original sense of 'making sacred' and is used as an equivalent of the word Yajna. When the Gita speaks of the 'sacrifice of knowledge', it does not mean a giving up of anything, but a turning of the mind towards the Divine in the search for knowledge and an offering of oneself through it. It is in this sense, too, that one speaks of the offering or sacrifice of works. The Mother has written somewhere that the spiritual sacrifice is joyful and not painful in its nature. On the spiritual path, very commonly, if a seeker still feels the old ties and responsibilities strongly, he is not asked to sever or leave them, but to let the call in him grow till all within is ready. Many, indeed, come away earlier because they feel that to cut loose is their only chance, and these have to go sometimes through a struggle. But the pain, the struggle, is not the essential character of the spiritual self-offering." (CWSA 28: 433)

2.

"But everything depends on the meaning you put on the word [*sacrifice*]. In its pure sense it means a consecrated giving, a making sacred to the Divine." (CWM 3: 114)

3.

"It [*pain and struggle in offering oneself to the Divine*] simply means that your sacrifice is still mental and has not yet become spiritual in its character. When your vital being consents to give up its desires and enjoyments, when it offers itself to the Divine, then the yajna will have begun. What I meant was that the European sense of the word is not the sense of the word 'yajna' or the sense of 'sacrifice' in such phrases as 'the sacrifice of works'. It does not mean that you give up all works for the sake of the Divine—for then there would be no sacrifice of works at all. Similarly the sacrifice of knowledge does not mean that you painfully and resolutely make yourself a fool for the sake of the Lord. Sacrifice means an inner offering to the Divine and the real spiritual sacrifice is a very joyful thing. Otherwise, one is only trying to make oneself fit and has not yet begun the real yajna. It is because your mind is struggling with your vital, the unwilling animal, and asking it to allow itself to be immolated that there is the pain and struggle." (CWSA 28: 433–434)

4.

"As to the hours devoted to work, needs, family, etc., they can be made an aid only on the following conditions.

(1) To regard all these things as not belonging to yourself, your inner being, but as things external, work to be done so long as it remains on your

shoulders to the best of your ability without desire or attachment of any kind. (2) To do all work as a sacrifice without any egoistic motive.

(3) To establish and deepen the inner calm and quiet. If that is done, all these things will be felt more and more as external and the falling off of desire and attachment will become possible." (CWSA 29: 44)

5.

"All work can and should be done in a yogic spirit. But the 'sacrifice' should be made to the *Supreme Divine* and not to a human being." (CWM 14: 61)

6.

"*Sweet Mother,*

You have said that to be allowed to sit in Sri Aurobindo's room and meditate there, 'one must have done much for Him' What do You mean by that, Mother? What can one do for the Lord which will be this 'much'?

To do something for the Lord is to give Him something of what one has or of what one does or of what one is. In other words, to offer Him a part of our belongings or all our possessions, to consecrate to Him a part of our work or all our activities, or to give ourselves to Him totally and unreservedly so that He can take possession of our nature in order to transform and divinise it. But there are many

persons who, without giving anything, always want to take and to receive. These people are selfish and they are not worthy of meditating in Sri Aurobindo's room." (CWM 16: 248–249)

7.

"Limit not sacrifice to the giving up of earthly goods or the denial of some desires & yearnings, but let every thought and every work & every enjoyment be an offering to God within thee. Let thy steps walk in thy Lord, let thy sleep and waking be a sacrifice to Krishna." (CWSA 12: 471) Thoughts and Aphorism

X—In Yoga Take Up Any Work Willingly as an Offering to the Divine

1.

"It is not a question of liking but of capacity—though usually (not always) liking goes with the capacity. But capacity can be developed and liking can be developed or rather the *rasa* you speak of. One cannot be said to be in the full Yogic condition—for the purposes of this Yoga—if one cannot take up with willingness any work given to one as an offering to the Divine. ... A nature not trained to accept external work and activity becomes mentally top-heavy—physically inert and obscure. It is only if one is disabled or too physically weak that physical work can be put aside altogether. I am speaking of course from the point of view of the ideal—the rest depends upon the nature.

As for the deity presiding over control of servants, godown work as well as over poetry or painting, it is always the same—the Shakti, the Mother." (CWSA 35: 53)

2.

"To be entirely sincere means to desire the divine Truth only, to surrender yourself more and more to the Divine Mother, to reject all personal demand and desire other than this one aspiration, to offer every action in life to the

Divine and do it as the work given without bringing in the ego. This is the basis of the divine life." (CWSA 29: 51)

3.

"(1) Offer yourself more and more—all the consciousness, all that happens in it, all your work and action." (CWSA 29: 104)

4.

"Sweet Mother, here Sri Aurobindo writes: 'No matter what the gift and to whom it is presented by us...' and then 'there must be a consciousness in the act that we are presenting it to the one divine Being.' The Synthesis of Yoga

These two phrases are contradictory, aren't they?

No, my child. That's because you don't understand the turn of the sentence. This means: the nature of the gift we make and to whom we give it is of little importance, provided that it is made as an act of consecration to the Divine.

That is what I always tell people in other words: whatever work you do—whether you go to an office, keep accounts, drive a car, anything—whatever the work you do, and naturally whomever you do it for, it must be an offering to the Divine. While doing it, you should keep the remembrance of the Divine and do it as an expression of

your consecration to the Divine. This is what Sri Aurobindo says, nothing else." (CWM 8: 89–90)

5.

"It must not be forgotten that the offering is made to the Divine's Work and not to any human enterprise. So the only thing that can be done is to express some appreciation in a few words." (CWM 14: 301)

6.

"*How can I offer my work?*

Usually one works for one's own profit and satisfaction; instead of that, one should work to serve the Divine and express His will." (CWM 14: 300)

7.

"*I have read and heard that one should 'give oneself' to the Divine. I don't understand how one should 'give oneself'.*

With your thought, give your thoughts.
With your heart, give your feelings.
With your body, give your work." (CWM 14: 103)

8.

"*What are the steps to follow for (1) sadhana and (2) silence of the mind?*

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

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

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

9.

"Work, action must be offered to the Mother, done for her sake only, without any thought for yourself, your own ideas, preferences, feelings, likes and dislikes. If one's eyes are fixed on these latter things, then at every step one gets some friction either in the mind or vital ..." (CWSA 32: 460)

10.

"Sri Aurobindo says this, that the true attitude in work comes 'when the work is always associated with the thought of the Mother, done as an offering to her, with the call to do it through you'." (CWM 8: 165)

XI—If You Offer Work to the Divine, Then You Will Progress

1.

"In any case, for me, my experience (which is sufficiently long, for it is now almost fifty-three years since I have been dealing with people, with their yoga, their inner efforts; I have seen much here and there, a little everywhere in the world); well, I do not believe that it is by meditation that you can transform yourself. I am absolutely convinced of the contrary.

If while doing what you have to do—whatever it may be, whatever work it is—if you do it and while doing it are careful not to forget the Divine, to offer to Him what you do and try so to give yourself to Him that He may change all your reactions—instead of their being selfish, petty, stupid and ignorant, making them luminous, generous—then in that way you will make progress. Not only will you have made some progress but you will have helped in the general progress. I have never seen people who have left everything in order to go and sit down in a more or less empty contemplation (for it is more or less empty), I have never seen such people making any progress, or in any case their progress is very trifling. I have seen persons who had no pretensions of doing yoga, who were simply filled with enthusiasm by the idea of terrestrial transformation and of the descent of the Divine into the world and who

did their little bit of work with that enthusiasm in the heart, giving themselves wholly, without reserve, without any selfish idea of a personal salvation; these I have seen making magnificent progress, truly magnificent. And sometimes they are wonderful." (CWM 5: 43–44)

2.

"Let us offer our work to the Divine; this is the sure means of progressing." (CWM 14: 297)

3.

"It is in work done as an offering to the Divine that the consciousness develops best." (CWM 13: 211)

4.

"Consciousness develops best through work done as an offering to the Divine.

Indolence and inaction end in *tamas*: that is a fall into unconsciousness; it is contrary to all progress and light.

To overcome one's ego, to live only in the service of the Divine—that is the ideal and the shortest way towards acquiring the true consciousness." (CWM 14: 297)

5.

"If you do your work as an offering which you lay in all sincerity at the feet of the Divine, work will do you as much good as meditation." (CWM 16: 178)

XII—In Work Don't Be Anxious About the Result

1.

"All this work [Regarding the day of the Annual Programme of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education] which you have done, which has taken almost a year, all these efforts you have made, all the difficulties you have overcome, all this you have done as an offering to the divine Work, you see, with all your sincerity and goodwill, the best of your ability and a complete good-heartedness. Yes, you have put into it all that you could, you have succeeded to a certain extent, in any case you have done things as well as you could. Then 'this' added with a smile which, indeed, was a little impish: 'What is it to you whether a few stupid fools see what you have done or not? Now you have done the work, you have accomplished it, you have shown what you could do. What is it to you whether a few foolish spectators see it or not?' It was *clear*, you see. I am expressing it; in expressing it I take away something from it. It was a state of consciousness, and then, indeed, it troubled me a little, because... trouble! that's a way of speaking... I told myself: 'Heavens! If it is like that after all, we can't be sure that the rain will stop. For if truly it is of no importance that some thousand odd people should see what we have done, if our offering has been accepted as an offering made as well as possible and with all our heart, the attitude is not to be anxious about

the result—we do not care for the result. Then, perhaps, the rain will continue'." (CWM 7: 384)

2.

"You make an effort to progress because you feel within you the need, the *imperative* need to make an effort and progress; and this effort is the gift you offer to the Divine Consciousness in you, the Divine Consciousness in the Universe, it is your way of expressing your gratitude, offering your self; and whether this results in progress or not is of no importance. You will progress when it is decided that the time has come to progress and not because you desire it.

If you wish to progress, if you make an effort to control yourself for instance, to overcome certain defects, weaknesses, imperfections, and if you expect to get a more or less immediate result from your effort, your effort loses all sincerity, it becomes a bargaining. You say, 'See! I am going to make an effort, but that's because I want this in exchange for my effort.' You are no longer spontaneous, no longer natural.

So there are two things to remember. First, we are incapable of judging *what* the result ought to be. If we put our trust in the Divine, if we say... if we say, 'Well now, I am going to give everything, everything, all I can give, effort, concentration, and He will judge what has to be given in exchange or even whether anything should be

given in exchange, and I do not know what the result should be.' Before we transform anything in ourselves, are we quite sure of the direction, the way, the form that this transformation should take?—Not at all. So, it is only our imagination and usually we greatly limit the result to be obtained and make it altogether petty, mean, superficial, relative. We do not know what the result can truly be, what it ought to be. We know it later. When it comes, when the change takes place, then if we look back, we say, 'Ah! That's it, that is what I was moving towards'—but we know it only later. Before that we only have vague imaginations which are quite superficial and childish in comparison with the true progress, the true transformation." (CWM 9: 316–317)

3.

"To have an absolutely true judgment, you must know how to execute and act without desire—only one in a thousand can do that. Almost all are anxious about the result or have the ambition to obtain a result. You must not be anxious about the results; simply do a thing because you have seen that it is that which must be done: tell yourself, 'I am doing this because this is the thing to be done, and whatever may happen afterwards is not my concern.'

That evidently is an ideal and until it is reached the action will always be mixed. Therefore unless you are moved by a clear vision of the Truth, you must take as your

rule to do always what you have to do, for it is that and nothing else that has to be done." (CWM 4: 12–13)

XIII—To Do Work for a Reward Is Contrary to the Rule of Yoga

1.

"To do anything for a reward is contrary to the rule of Yoga. One must do a thing because it is right or else do it for the Divine, not for a reward." (CWSA 29: 232)

XIV—The Only Reward in Work Is a Constant Progression in Divine Consciousness

1.

"There must be no demand for fruit and no seeking for reward; the only fruit for you is the pleasure of the Divine Mother and the fulfilment of her work, your only reward a constant progression in divine consciousness and calm and strength and bliss. The joy of service and the joy of inner growth through works is the sufficient recompense of the selfless worker." (CWSA 32: 12)

XV—Feel the Presence of the Divine in Work

1.

"*Often in the beginning of the action this can be done; but as one gets engrossed in the work, one forgets. How is one to remember?*

The condition to be aimed at, the real achievement of Yoga, the final perfection and attainment, for which all else is only a preparation, is a consciousness in which it is impossible to do anything without the Divine; for then, if you are without the Divine, the very source of your action disappears; knowledge, power, all are gone. But so long as you feel that the powers you use are your own, you will not miss the Divine support.

In the beginning of the Yoga you are apt to forget the Divine very often. But by constant aspiration you increase your remembrance and you diminish the forgetfulness. But this should not be done as a severe discipline or a duty; it must be a movement of love and joy. Then very soon a stage will come when, if you do not feel the presence of the Divine at every moment and whatever you are doing, you feel at once lonely and sad and miserable.

Whenever you find that you can do something without feeling the presence of the Divine and yet be perfectly comfortable, you must understand that you are

not consecrated in that part of your being. That is the way of the ordinary humanity which does not feel any need of the Divine. But for a seeker of the Divine Life it is very different. And when you have entirely realised unity with the Divine, then, if the Divine were only for a second to withdraw from you, you would simply drop dead; for the Divine is now the Life of your life, your whole existence, your single and complete support. If the Divine is not there, nothing is left." (CWM 3: 26–27)

2.

"It is not at first easy to remember the presence in work; but if one revives the sense of the presence immediately after the work is over it is all right. In time the sense of the presence will become automatic even in work." (CWSA 29: 258–259)

3.

"To feel the peace above or about your head is a first step; you have to get connected with it and it must descend into you and fill your mind and life and body and surround you so that you live in it—for this peace is one sign of the Divine's presence with you, and once you have it all the rest will begin to come." (CWSA 29: 126)

4.

"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." (CWSA 3: 20)

XVI—Have No Attachment to Any Work

1.

"You must be able, if you are ready to follow the divine order, to take up whatever work you are given, even a stupendous work, and leave it the next day with the same quietness with which you took it up and not feel that the responsibility is yours. There should be no attachment—to any object or any mode of life. You must be absolutely free. If you want to have the true yogic attitude, you must be able to accept everything that comes from the Divine and let it go easily and without regret. The attitude of the ascetic who says, 'I want nothing' and the attitude of the man of the world who says, 'I want this thing" are the same. The one may be as much attached to his renunciation as the other to his possession.' (CWM 3: 9)

2.

"To be free from all attachment does not mean running away from all occasion for attachment. All these people who assert their asceticism, not only run away but warn others not to try!

This seems so obvious to me. When you need to run away from a thing in order not to experience it, it means that you are not above it, you are still on the same level.

Anything that suppresses, diminishes or lessens cannot bring freedom. Freedom has to be experienced in the whole of life and in all sensations.

As a matter of fact I have made a whole series of studies on the subject, on the purely physical plane.... In order to be above all possible error, we tend to eliminate any occasion for error. For example, if you do not want to say any useless words, you stop speaking; people who take a vow of silence imagine that this is control of speech—it is not true! It is only eliminating the occasion for speech and therefore for saying useless things. ...

For fear of being mistaken in our actions, we stop doing anything at all; for fear of being mistaken in our speech, we stop speaking; for fear of eating for the pleasure of eating, we do not eat at all—this is not freedom, it is simply reducing the manifestation to a minimum; and the natural conclusion is Nirvana. But if the Lord wanted only Nirvana, nothing but Nirvana would exist! It is obvious that He conceives of the coexistence of all opposites, and that for Him this must be the beginning of a totality. So obviously, if one feels meant for that, one can choose only one of His manifestations, that is to say, the absence of manifestation. But it is still a limitation. And this is not the only way to find Him, far from it!

It is a very common tendency which probably originates from an ancient suggestion or perhaps from some lack, some incapacity—reduce, reduce, reduce one's needs, reduce one's activities, reduce one's words, reduce one's food, reduce one's active life—and all that becomes so narrow. In one's aspiration not to make any more

mistakes, one eliminates any occasion for making them. It is not a cure.

But the other way is much, much more difficult.

(Silence)

No, the solution is to act only under the divine impulsion, to speak only under the divine impulsion, to eat only under the divine impulsion. That is the difficult thing, because naturally, you immediately confuse the divine impulsion with your personal impulses.

I suppose this was the idea of all the apostles of renunciation: to eliminate everything coming from outside or from below so that if something from above should manifest one would be in a condition to receive it. But from the collective point of view, this process could take thousands of years. From the individual point of view, it is possible; but then one must keep intact the aspiration to receive the true impulsion—not the aspiration for 'complete liberation', but the aspiration for *active* identification with the Supreme, that is to say, to will only what He wills, to do only what He wants: to exist by and in Him alone." (CWM 10: 194–196)

3.

"But... indeed, once, very long ago, when I was still in Paris and used to see Mme. David-Neel almost every day, she,

you see, was full of her own idea and told me, 'You should not think of an action, it means attachment for the action; when you want to do something, it means that you are still tied to the things of this world.' Then I told her, 'No, there is nothing easier. You have only to imagine *everything* that has been done before and all that will be done later and all that is happening now, and you will then realise that your action is a breath, like this, one second in eternity, and you can no longer be attached to it'." (CWM 7: 392–393)

4.

"When one wants to detach oneself from something, from a certain movement or activity or state of consciousness, this is the most effective method; one steps back a little, watches the thing like that, as one would watch a scene in a play, and one doesn't intervene. And a moment later, the thing doesn't concern you any longer, it is something which takes place outside you. Then you become very calm.

Only, when you do this, you never remedy anything in the outer movement, it remains what it is, but it no longer affects you. We have said this already I don't know how many times: it is only a first step, it helps you not to feel much troubled by things. But things remain as they are—indefinitely. It is a negative state." (CWM 8: 103)

XVII—Dedicating One-self through Work Is the Most Powerful and Indispensable Element of the Sadhana

1.

"What matters [*in the spiritual path*] is one's own aspiration for the Divine, one's own faith, surrender, selfless self-giving. Others can be left to the Divine who will lead each according to his nature. Meditation, work, bhakti are each means of preparative help towards fulfilment; all are included in this path. If one can dedicate one-self through work, that is one of the most powerful means towards the self-giving which is itself the most powerful and indispensable element of the sadhana.

To cleave to the path means to follow it without leaving it or turning aside. It is a path of self-offering of the whole being in all its parts, the offering of the thinking mind and the heart, the will and actions, the inner and the outer instruments so that one may arrive at the experience of the Divine, the Presence within, the psychic and spiritual change. The more one gives of oneself in all ways, the better for the sadhana. But all cannot do it to the same extent, with the same rapidity, in the same way. How others do it or fail to do it should not be one's concern—how to do it faithfully oneself is the one thing important." (CWSA 29: 213–214)

2.

"Self-dedication does not depend on the particular work you do, but on the spirit in which all work, of whatever kind it may be, is done. Any work, done well and carefully as a sacrifice to the Divine, without desire or egoism, with equality of mind and calm tranquillity in good or bad fortune, for the sake of the Divine and not for the sake of any personal gain, reward or result, with the consciousness that it is the Divine Power to which all work belongs, is a means of self-dedication through Karma." (CWSA 29: 246–247)

3.

"For here all works are dedicated to the Lord, the One who is all and contains all. And all works are done not for a personal profit but as an offering of love, for here the only power we can dispose of is the power of love; and I am there simply as a symbol and a messenger to guide and unite the efforts." (CWM 13: 151)

4.

"Be faithful to your ideal and dedicate your work to the Divine." (CWM 14: 302)

XVIII—Spirit of Service to the Divine Is a Powerful Means for Progress

1.

"Yes, the use to which you have turned your vital capacities in Bengal and Bombay,—to turn them into instruments of service and the Divine Work, is certainly the best possible. Through such action and such use of the vital power, one can certainly progress in Yoga. Vital power is necessary for work and you have an exceptional amount of it. Of course, to make a full Yogic use of it and of its force for action, the ego must gradually fade out and vital attachments and impulses be replaced by the spiritual motive. Bhakti, devotion to the Divine, and the spirit of service to the Divine are among the most powerful means for this change." (CWSA 29: 245–246)

2.

"All acts are included in action,—work is action regulated towards a fixed end and methodically and constantly done, service is work done for the Mother's purpose and under her direction." (CWSA 29: 246)

3.

"The worker—he has only the joy of the work. But the work that is done as a service brings still greater joy." (CWM 6: 266)

4.

"Without discipline no proper work is possible.

Without discipline no proper life is possible.

And above all, without discipline no Sadhana is possible.

Each department has necessarily a discipline and you must follow the discipline of your department.

Personal feelings, grudges and misunderstandings must never interfere with the work which is done as a service to the Divine and not for human interests.

Your service to the Divine must be scrupulously honest, disinterested and unselfish, otherwise it has no value." (CWM 13: 163)

5.

"You have not been asked to give yourself up to the service of the Divine in any outward or physical sense, but to prepare yourself inwardly by taking all life and all work wherever you are as a sacrifice, an offering to the Divine." (CWSA 35: 574)

6.

"I told you already that if someone refuses to be conscientious in his work, what can I do? It is true that the work suffers, but he suffers still more, for no amount of meditation can replace sincerity in the service of the Divine." (CWM 16: 27)

XIX—Learn to Work from Within

1.

"You must learn to act always from within—from your inner being which is in contact with the Divine. The outer should be a mere instrument and should not be allowed at all to compel or dictate your speech, thought or action." (CWSA 29: 254)

2.

"All should be done quietly from within—working, speaking, reading, writing as part of the real consciousness—not with the dispersed and unquiet movement of the ordinary consciousness." (CWSA 29: 254)

3.

"One can work and remain quiet within. Quietude does not mean having an empty mind or doing no action at all." (CWSA 29: 254)

4.

"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)

5.

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

6.

"It is probably because at the time of the work the tendency of the consciousness to externalise itself is greater (that is always the case), so the pressure grows stronger in order to produce a contrary inward tendency. This produces some tendency to go inside in the way of a complete internalisation (going into a sort of samadhi); but what should happen during work is a going inside in a wakeful condition and becoming aware of the psychic within as you used to do under the pressure while the outer mind does the work. This is the condition that must eventually come." (CWSA 29: 255)

7.

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

8.

"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)

9.

"The difficulty about the two parts of the mind is one that everybody has when the tendency to go within begins. It is solved in this sadhana by a sort of harmony being established by which even in doing one's work and keeping the necessary outer activities one can still live within in the fullness of the inner life and experience." (CWSA 30: 204)

10.

"You must do the work as an offering to the Divine and take it as part of your Sadhana. In that spirit the nature of the work is of little importance and you can do any work without losing the contact with the inner presence." (CWM 14: 297)

11.

"First you must attain the true consciousness, be in contact with the Divine and let Him govern your action; and then you can act upon outer circumstances, even actions, and overcome outer difficulties. You must have the inner experience first before hoping to be able to [...]1 something external. In fact everything is founded upon an awareness of the divine Consciousness, and unless this is done all the rest is uncertain. Nothing can be permanently established. It is only after one has become conscious; then one can follow one's path rapidly, without fear. Otherwise there are always... one always risks making mistakes, going on a false track." (CWM 6: 393) [1 Word missing in transcript]

12.

"You used the Force for the work, and it supported you so long as you preferred to stick to that work. What is of first importance is not the religious or non-religious character of the work done, but the inner attitude in which it is done. If the attitude is vital and not psychic, then one throws oneself out in the work and loses the inner contact. If it is psychic, the inner contact remains, the Force is felt supporting or doing the work and the sadhana progresses." (CWSA 29: 271)

13.

"You can try [*writing a novel*], if you like. The difficulty is that the subject matter of a novel belongs mostly to the outer consciousness, so that a lowering or externalising can easily come. This apart from the difficulty of keeping the inner poise when putting the mind into outer work. If you could get an established poise within, then it would be possible to do any work without disturbing or lowering the consciousness." (CWSA 29: 292)

XX—All Work Done for the Divine

1.

"...it is not true that physical work is of an inferior value to mental culture, it is the arrogance of the intellect that makes the claim. All work done for the Divine is equally divine; manual labour done for the Divine is more divine than mental culture done for one's own development, fame or mental satisfaction.

... If there is temporary physical inability, one can take rest but solely for the purpose of recovering the physical energy. The idea of giving up physical work for mental self-development is a creation of the mental ego." (CWSA 29: 247) (CWSA 31: 767–768)

2.

"Your object is not only to practise Yoga for your own internal progress and perfection, but also to do a work for the Divine." (CWSA 29: 231)

3.

"If you take the right attitude in your work, that itself will bring the help. The right attitude is to work for the sake of the Divine, as an offering, without demand for any reward, without selfish claims and desires, without self-assertion and arrogance, not quarrelling with your fellow workers, thinking it to be the Mother's work and not your own, and

trying to feel her power behind the work. If you can do that, your nature will progress and change." (CWSA 31: 109)

4.

"The ideal attitude is to belong only to the Divine, to work only for the Divine and above all to expect only from the Divine strength, peace and satisfaction. The Divine is all-merciful and gives us all that we need to lead us as quickly as possible to the goal." (CWM 14: 15)

5.

"Work for the Divine and you will feel an ineffable joy filling your being." (CWM 14: 302)

6.

"I may say however that I do not regard business as something evil or tainted, any more than it was so regarded in ancient spiritual India. If I did, I would not be able to receive money from *X* or from those of our disciples who in Bombay trade with East Africa; nor could we then encourage them to go on with their work but would have to tell them to throw it up and attend to their spiritual progress alone. How are we to reconcile *X*'s seeking after spiritual light and his mill? Ought I not to tell him to leave his mill to itself and to the devil and go into some Ashram to meditate? Even if I myself had had the command to do

business as I had the command to do politics I would have done it without the least spiritual or moral compunction. All depends on the spirit in which a thing is done, the principle on which it is built and use to which it is turned. I have done politics and the most violent kind of revolutionary politics, *ghoraṁ karma*, and I have supported war and sent men to it, even though politics is not always or often a very clean occupation nor can war be called a spiritual line of action. But Krishna calls upon Arjuna to carry on war of the most terrible kind and by his example encourage men to do every kind of human work, *sarvakarmāṇi*. Do you contend that Krishna was an unspiritual man and that his advice to Arjuna was mistaken or wrong in principle? Krishna goes farther and declares that a man by doing in the right way and in the right spirit the work dictated to him by his fundamental nature, temperament and capacity and according to his and its dharma can move towards the Divine. He validates the function and dharma of the Vaishya as well as of the Brahmin and Kshatriya. It is in his view quite possible for a man to do business and make money and earn profits and yet be a spiritual man, practise Yoga, have an inner life. The Gita is constantly justifying works as a means of spiritual salvation and enjoining a Yoga of works as well as of Bhakti and Knowledge. Krishna, however, superimposes a higher law also that work must be done without desire, without attachment to any fruit or reward, without any egoistic attitude or motive, as an

offering or sacrifice to the Divine. This is the traditional Indian attitude towards these things, that all work can be done if it is done according to the dharma and, if it is rightly done, it does not prevent the approach to the Divine or the access to spiritual knowledge and the spiritual life." (CWSA 29: 248–249) (CWSA 35: 769–770)

7.

"*Can one study for the Divine and not for oneself, prepare oneself for the divine work?*

Yes, if you study with the feeling that you must develop yourselves to become instruments. But truly, it is done in a very different spirit, isn't it?—very different. To begin with, there are no longer subjects you like and those you don't, no longer any classes which bore you and those which don't, no longer any difficult things and things not difficult, no longer any teachers who are pleasant or any who are not—all that disappears immediately. One enters a state in which one takes whatever happens as an opportunity to learn to prepare oneself for the divine work, and everything becomes interesting. Naturally, if one is doing that, it is quite all right." (CWM 6: 153–154)

8.

"*What you have said in the Bulletin about 'educating the mind'—this means that one educates oneself for that, lives*

and studies for the Divine. Then isn't this a work done for the Divine?

Yes, yes, yes. It is very good if it is done with that aim. But it must be with that aim. For instance, when one wants to understand the deep laws of life, wants to be ready to receive whatever message is sent by the Divine, if one wants to be able to penetrate the secrets of the Manifestation, all this asks for a developed mind, so one studies with that will. But then one no longer needs to choose one's particular subject of study, for everything, no matter what, the least little circumstance in life, becomes a teacher who can teach you something, teach you how to think and act. Even—I think I said this precisely—even the reflections of an ignorant child can help you to understand something you didn't understand before. Your attitude is so different. It is always an attitude which is awaiting a discovery, an opportunity for progress, a rectification of a wrong movement, a step ahead, and so it is like a magnet that attracts from all around you opportunities to make this progress. The least things can teach you how to progress. As you have the consciousness and will to progress, everything becomes an opportunity, and you project this consciousness and will to progress upon all things.

And not only is this useful for you, but it is useful for all those around you with whom you have a contact." (CWM 6: 154)

9.

"You seem to forget that by the fact that you are living in the Ashram, it is neither for yourself nor for a boss that you are working, but for the Divine. Your life must be entirely consecrated to the Divine Work and cannot be governed by petty human considerations." (CWM 13: 165)

10.

"Disinterested work done for the Divine: the surest means of progressing." (CWM 14: 302)

11.

"Disinterested work: work done with no other motive than of doing as well as possible the Divine's work." (CWM 14: 302)

12.

"When one works for the Divine, it is much better to do perfectly what one does than to aim at a very big work." (CWM 14: 306)

13.

"It is true that the divine protection is always around us, but it fully works only when we are faced by dangers which were unavoidable; that is to say, if dangers suddenly rise on the way when we are doing some work for the Divine, then the protection works at its best. But to take up some

work which is, after all, not at all indispensable and not even surely useful and which is extremely dangerous, counting on the divine protection to save us from all possible consequences, this is a movement which is like a challenge to the Divine, and the Divine will never accept it." (CWM 14: 325)

14.

"You can answer to your brother that Yoga life and the ordinary life cannot be the same thing—otherwise there would be no use in doing Yoga, if one lives just as others in the same way and with the same motives. The object of the Asram life is to prepare a new way of living based on a spiritual consciousness—it is the preparation of a new foundation of life in which all works have to be done not for the self but for the Divine." (CWSA 35: 591–592)

15.

"No 'instruction' given. It is an Asram for spiritual life and the only method is to open to the divine influence and live and work for the Divine." (CWSA 35: 595)

16.

"To work for the Divine is very good, it is a delight.

But to work with the Divine is a felicity infinitely deeper and sweeter still." (CWM 14: 326)

17.

"*My little mother,*

Yesterday I told you that 'we' had painted an envelope. By 'we' I mean that there is me and you. I feel that it is not I who am working, so I say 'we'. I am your child.

That is *really* nice and I am *very pleased*. Yes, I am always with you and even more specially when you are working on your painting and music. Are you aware that you are making a great deal of progress? I like the envelopes that *both of us are painting together* very much, and that is one more proof that we are doing them together, because they are nearly always just as I thought they should be. The small one you sent this morning is very fine and the choice of colours is excellent.

Affectionately.

Your little mother." (CWM 16: 115)

XXI—In the Most Active Action, 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.*" Ibid.

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.

Do not fall into the very common error of believing that you must sit in an absolutely quiet corner where nobody passes by, where you are in a classical position and altogether immobile, in order to be able to meditate—it is not true. What is needed is to succeed in meditating under

all circumstances, and I call 'meditating' not emptying your head but concentrating yourself in a contemplation of the Divine; and if you keep this contemplation within you, all that you do will change its quality—not its appearance, for apparently it will be the same thing, but its quality. And life will change its quality, and you, you will feel a little different from what you were, with a peace, a certitude, an inner calm, an unchanging force, something which never gives way.

In that state it will be difficult to do you harm — the forces always try, this world is so full of adverse forces which seek to upset everything... but they succeed in a very small measure, only in the measure necessary to force you to make a new progress.

Each time you receive a blow from life, tell yourself immediately, 'Ah, I have to make a progress'; then the blow becomes a blessing. Instead of tucking your head between your shoulders, you lift it up with joy and you say, 'What is it I have to learn? I want to know. What is it I have to change? I want to know.' This is what you should do." (CWM 4: 121–122)

2.

"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)

XXII—Difficulty in Constantly Remembering the Divine While Working

1.

"I have never put any ban on bhakti. Also I am not conscious of having banned meditation either at any time. I have stressed both bhakti and knowledge in my Yoga as well as works, even if I have not given any of them an exclusive importance like Shankara or Chaitanya.

The difficulty you feel or any sadhak feels about sadhana is not really a question of meditation versus bhakti versus works. It is a difficulty of the attitude to be taken, the approach or whatever you may like to call it.

If you can't as yet remember the Divine all the time you are working, it does not greatly matter. To remember and dedicate at the beginning and give thanks at the end ought to be enough for the present. Or at the most to remember too when there is a pause. Your method seems to me rather painful and difficult,— you seem to be trying to remember and work with one and the same part of the mind. I don't know if that is possible. When people remember all the time during work (it can be done), it is usually with the back of their minds or else there is created gradually a faculty of double thought or else a double consciousness—one in front that works, and one within that witnesses and remembers. There is also another way which was mine for a long time—a condition in which the

work takes place automatically and without intervention of personal thought or mental action, while the consciousness remains silent in the Divine. The thing, however, does not come so much by trying as by a very simple constant aspiration and will of consecration—or else by a movement of the consciousness separating the inner from the instrumental being. Aspiration and will of consecration calling down a greater Force to do the work is a method which brings great results, even if in some it takes a long time about it. That is a great secret of sadhana, to know how to get things done by the Power behind or above instead of doing all by the mind's effort. I don't mean to say that the mind's effort is unnecessary or has no result—only if it tries to do everything by itself, that becomes a laborious effort for all except the spiritual athletes. Nor do I mean that the other method is the longed-for shortcut; the result may, as I have said, take a long time. Patience and firm resolution are necessary in every method of sadhana." (CWSA 29: 214–215)

2.

"All the difficulties you describe are quite natural things common to most people. It is easy for one, comparatively, to remember and be conscious when one sits quiet in meditation; it is difficult when one has to be busy with work. The remembrance and consciousness in work have to come by degrees, you must not expect to have it all at

once; nobody can get it all at once. It comes in two ways,—first, if one practises remembering the Mother and offering the work to her each time one does something (not all the time one is doing, but at the beginning or whenever one can remember), then that slowly becomes easy and habitual to the nature. Secondly, by the meditation an inner consciousness begins to develop which, after a time, not at once or suddenly, becomes more and more automatically permanent. One feels this as a separate consciousness from that outer one which works. At first this separate consciousness is not felt when one is working, but as soon as the work stops one feels it was there all the time watching from behind; afterwards it begins to be felt during the work itself, as if there were two parts of oneself—one watching and supporting from behind and remembering the Mother and offering to her and the other doing the work. When this happens, then to work with the true consciousness becomes more and more easy.

It is the same with all the rest. It is by the development of the inner consciousness that all the things you speak of will be set right. For instance it is a part of the being that has *utsāha* for the work, another that feels the pressure of quietude and is not so disposed to work. Your mood depends on which comes up at the time—it is so with all people. To combine the two 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. Therefore you need not be discouraged by observing these things in you. There is hardly anybody who has not found these things in himself. All this can be arranged by the action of the inner Force with the constant consent and call of the sadhak. By himself he might not be able to do it, but with the Divine Force working within all can be done." (CWSA 29: 259–260)

3.

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

It does not remain when engaged in work because it is still confined to the mind proper which has only just received the gift of silence. When the new consciousness is fully formed and has taken entire possession of the vital nature and the physical being (the vital as yet is only touched or dominated by the silence, not possessed by it), then this defect will disappear." (CWSA 29: 124)

4.

"Absorption in work is inevitable. It is enough to offer it when beginning and ending and to encourage the attitude to grow = for You and by You." (CWSA 29: 258)

5.

"It is a certain inertia in the physical consciousness which shuts it up in the groove of what it is doing so that it is fixed in that and not free to remember [*the Mother*]." (CWSA 29: 258)

6.

"Many find it easy to think of the Mother when working; but when they read or write, their mind goes off to the thing read or written and they forget everything else. I think that is the case with most. Physical work on the other hand can be done with the most external part of the mind, leaving the rest free to remember or to experience." (CWSA 32: 259)

XXIII—Working with a Double Consciousness

1.

"But as the peace and contact grow a double consciousness can develop—one engaged in the work, another behind silent and observing or turned towards the Divine—in this consciousness the aspiration can be maintained even while the external consciousness is turned towards the work." (CWSA 29: 256)

2.

"One can both aspire and attend to the work and do many other things at the same time when the consciousness is developed by Yoga." (CWSA 29: 256)

3.

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

4.

"That is how the consciousness must work when it lives in the Divine. One part of the Force in it works and offers the work to the Mother, another part lives in the experience of the Mother, the third hears what the others say and answers without losing the inner consciousness." (CWSA 29: 256)

5.

"But what I mean is a sort of stepping backward into something silent and observant within which is not involved in the action, yet sees and can shed its light upon it. There are then two parts of the being, one inner looking at and witnessing and knowing, the other executive and instrumental and doing. This gives not only freedom but power—and in this inner being one can get into touch with the Divine not through mental activity but through the substance of the being, by a certain inward touch, perception, reception, receiving also the right inspiration or intuition of the work." (CWSA 29: 256)

6.

"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)

7.

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

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

8.

"Before things become pucca in the consciousness, the doing of work does carry the consciousness outward unless one has made it a sadhana to feel the 'Force greater than oneself' working through one. That I suppose is why the Shankarites considered work to be in its own nature an operation of the Ignorance and incompatible with a condition of realisation. But as a matter of fact there are three stages there: (I) in which the work brings you to a lower as well as outer consciousness so that you have afterwards to recover the realisation; (II) in which the work brings you out, but the realisation remains behind (or above), not felt while you work, but as soon as the work ceases you find it there just as it was; (III) in which the work makes no difference, for the realisation or spiritual condition remains through the work itself." (CWSA 29: 257)

9.

"In action it is always more difficult [*to keep a higher state of consciousness*] because the consciousness goes out towards the work or else is at least not wholly held within—it is therefore difficult to remain in an inward state. There is no other obstacle. But if the inward state is strong and habitual, then it gains upon the action also and at first one

always feels it behind and afterwards it occupies the whole consciousness, outer included, and the action takes place in it. This is for static states like peace, self-realisation etc. If one has the realisation of the dynamic Force, there is no difficulty—because that can take up the action at once." (CWSA 29: 257)

10.

"It is the external mind that gets absorbed in the work and covers what is behind. There must be a double consciousness, one acting, one behind observing, separate, free to continue the sadhana." (CWSA 29: 257–258)

XXIV— In Work, Be Constantly Governed by the Divine

1.

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

2.

"As for the feeling from within, it depends on being able to go inside. Sometimes it comes of itself with the deepening of the consciousness by bhakti or otherwise; sometimes it comes by practice—a sort of referring the matter and listening for the answer—listening is of course a metaphor but it is difficult to express it otherwise—it doesn't mean that the answer comes necessarily in the shape of words, spoken or unspoken, though it does sometimes or for some; it can take any shape. The main difficulty for many is *to be sure of the right answer*. For that it is necessary to be able to contact the consciousness of the Guru inwardly—that comes best by bhakti. Otherwise it may become a delicate and ticklish job. Obstacles, (1) normal habit of relying on outward means for everything, (2) ego,

substituting its suggestions for the right answer, (3) mental activity, (4) intruder nuisances. I think you need not be eager for this, but rely on the growth of the inner consciousness. The above is only by way of general explanation." (CWSA 29: 261)

3.

"It is always the restlessness that makes you lose touch. If you are not sure about the work, remain quiet and you will get in time the idea of what to do; if you worry and are restless, you get confused and disturbed and can no longer feel connection with the Force, though it is always there above you and supporting you. As to blind selfish feelings, they are still more confusing and disturbing; but here too the only thing is to remain quiet, detach yourself, disown and throw away the feeling. To get upset, disturbed and in despair, is no use; it only prolongs the confusion and unrest and prevents you from feeling the connection." (CWSA 29: 262)

4.

"Openness in work means the same thing as openness in the consciousness. The same Force that works in your consciousness in meditation and clears away the cloud and confusion whenever you open to it, can also take up your action and not only make you aware of the defects in it but keep you conscious of what is to be done and guide your

mind and hands to do it. If you open to it in your work, you will begin to feel this guidance more and more until behind all your activities you will be aware of the Force of the Mother." (CWSA 29: 262)

XXV—Receiving the Divine Power or Force in Work

1.

"To be able to receive the Divine Power and let it act through you in the things of the outward life, there are three necessary conditions:

1. Quietude, equality—not to be disturbed by anything that happens, to keep the mind still and firm, seeing the play of forces, but itself tranquil.

2. Absolute faith—faith that what is for the best will happen, but also that if one can make oneself a true instrument, the fruit will be that which one's will guided by the Divine Light sees as the thing to be done—*kartavyaṁ karma.*

3. Receptivity—the power to receive the Divine Force and to feel its presence and the presence of the Mother in it and allow it to work, guiding one's sight and will and action. If this power and presence can be felt and this plasticity made the habit of the consciousness in action,—but plasticity to the Divine Force alone without bringing in any foreign element,—the eventual result is sure." (CWSA 29: 266)

2.

"What happened to you shows what are the conditions of that state in which the Divine Power takes the place of the ego and directs the action, making the mind, life and body

an instrument. A receptive silence of the mind, an effacement of the mental ego and the reduction of the mental being to the position of a witness, a close contact with the Divine Power and an openness of the being to that one Influence and no other are the conditions for becoming an instrument of the Divine, moved by that and that only.

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

... The silence opens the mind and the rest of the being to greater things, sometimes to the cosmic consciousness, sometimes to the experience of the silent Self, sometimes to the presence or power of the Divine, sometimes to a higher consciousness than that of the human mind; the mind's silence is the most favourable condition for any of these things to happen." (CWSA 29: 266–267)

3.

"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. In many there was a spontaneous call of the vital for the Force, so that they felt the flood of energy as soon as they began the work and it continued so long as the work had to be done.

The vital is the means of effectuation on the physical plane, so its action and energy are necessary for all work—without it, if the mind only drives without the cooperation and instrumentation of the vital, there is hard and disagreeable labour and effort with results which are usually not at all of the best kind. The ideal state for work is when there is a natural concentration of the consciousness in the special energy, supported by an easeful rest and quiescence of the consciousness as a whole. Distraction of the mind by other activities disturbs this balance of ease and concentrated energy,—fatigue also disturbs or destroys it. The first thing therefore that

has to be done is to bring back the supporting restfulness and this is ordinarily done by cessation of work and repose. In the experience you had that was replaced by a restfulness that came from above in answer to your station of prayer and an energy that also came from above. It is the same principle as in sadhana—the reason why we want people to make the consciousness quiet so that the higher peace may come in and on the basis of that peace a new Force from above.

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. Effort and expenditure of energy are not necessarily the same thing; the best expenditure of energy is that which flows easily without effort at all—when the Inspiration or Force (any Force) works of itself and the mind and vital and even body are glowing instruments and the Force flows out in an intense and happy working—an almost labour less labour." (CWSA 29: 267–268)

4.

"... for example, through a concurrence of circumstances, a work comes into your hands. Take an artist who has in one way or another got an inspiration and resolved to paint a picture. He knows very well that if he has no inspiration and is not sustained by forces other than his own, he will do nothing much. It will look more like a daub than a painting. He knows this. But it has been settled, the painting is to be done; there may be many reasons for that, but the painting has to be done. Then if he had the passive attitude, well, he would place his palette, his colours, his brushes, his canvas and then sit down in front of it and say to the Divine: 'Now you are going to paint.' But the Divine does not do things this way. The painter himself must take up everything and arrange everything, concentrate on his subject, find the forms, the colours that will express it and put his whole will for a more and more perfect execution. His will must be there all the time. But he has to keep the sense that he must be open to the inspiration, he will not forget that in spite of all his knowledge of the technique, in spite of the care he takes to arrange, organise and prepare his colours, his forms, his design, in spite of all that, if he has no inspiration, it will be one picture among a million others and it will not be very interesting. He does not forget. He attempts, he tries to see, to feel what he wants his painting to express and in what way it should be expressed. He has his colours, he has his brushes, he has

his model, he has made his sketch which he will enlarge and make into a picture, he calls his inspiration. There are even some who manage to have a clear, precise vision of what is to be done. But then, day after day, hour after hour, they have this will to work, to study, to do with care all that must be done until they reproduce as perfectly as they can the first inspiration.... That person has worked for the Divine, in communion with Him, but not in a passive way, not with a passive surrender; it is with an active surrender, a dynamic will. The result generally is something very good. Well, the example of the painter is interesting, because a painter who is truly an artist is able to see what he is going to do, he is able to connect himself to the divine Power that is beyond all expression and inspires all expression. For the poet, the writer, it is the same thing and for all people who do something, it is the same." (CWM 5: 46–47)

5.

"It is better to use the energies received from the Divine for perfection rather than for aggrandisement.

The perfection of the work done is much more important than its bulk or the bigness of its scope." (CWM 14: 306)

6.

"Passivity can be only to the Divine Force when it is felt at work,—there can be no passivity to other forces, for that

would be dangerous in the extreme. Passivity does *not* mean a blank mind—it means allowing the Divine Force to work without interference of the mental preferences, vital desires or physical disinclinations." (CWSA 29: 188–189)

7.

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

XXVI—Quietude Is the Proper Basis for Work

1.

"As for quietude and work, quietude is the proper basis for work—not restlessness. You speak as if quietude and being alive and working were not compatible! The Mother and myself do plenty of work, I suppose, and we are quite alive, but it is out of quietude that we do it. To worry and be restless and think always 'I am not doing well my work' is not the way; you have to be quiet, conscious more and more of a greater Force than your own working in you: that Force will hereafter take up your work and do it for you." (CWSA 29: 284)

2.

"As I have said already, in all matters, work and study as well as in the inner progress in the Yoga, the same thing is needed if you want perfection—quietude of mind, becoming aware of the Force, opening to it, allowing it to work in you. To aim at perfection is all right, but restlessness of mind is not the way towards it. To dwell upon your imperfections and be always thinking how to do and what to do, is not the way either. Remain quiet, open yourself, allow the consciousness to grow—call the Force to work. As it grows and as the Force works, you will become aware not only of what is imperfect, but of the movement which will take you (not at one step, but

progressively) out of the imperfection and you will then only have to follow that movement.

If you overstrain yourself by too prolonged work or a restless working, that disturbs or weakens the nervous system, the vital-physical, and lays one open to the action of the wrong forces. To work but quietly so as to have a steady progress is the right way." (CWSA 29: 143)

3.

"A constant babble of words seems to be the indispensable accompaniment to daily work. And yet as soon as one makes an effort to reduce the noise to a minimum, one realises that many things are done better and faster in silence and that this helps to maintain one's inner peace and concentration." (CWM 12: 58)

4.

"Do not worry about the work; the more you will do it quietly and calmly, the more it will become effective." (CWM 14: 315)

5.

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

6.

"It is this quiet and spontaneous action that is the characteristic divine action. The aggressive action is only, as you say, when there is resistance and struggle. This does not mean that the quiet force cannot be intense. It can be more intense than the aggressive, but its intensity only increases the intensity of the peace." (CWSA 29: 272)

7.

"When you feel the better condition, the peace and force at work, it is better to allow the force to work, keeping yourself still and quiet, and not try to do things by the mind.

When there is the confusion or wrong condition, then you have to call down the quiet, to try to get back to the true position, not listening to the wrong thoughts but rejecting them. If you cannot do that at once, still remain as quiet as possible and aspire and offer yourself. The Divine Force can always do more than the personal effort; so the one thing is to get quiet and call it down or back to the front—for it is always there behind or above you." (CWSA 29: 272)

XXVII—Work Is Best Done in Silence

1.

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

2.

"The recurrence of the experience of the receding away of thoughts, the cessation of the thought-generating mechanism and its replacement by the mental self-space, is normal and as it should be; for this silence or at any rate the capacity for it has to grow until one can have it at will or even established in an automatic permanence. For this silence of the ordinary mind mechanism is necessary in order that the higher mentality may manifest, descend, occupy by degrees the place of the present imperfect mentality and transform the activities of the latter into its own fuller movements. The difficulty of its coming when you are at work is only at the beginning—afterwards when it is more settled one finds that one can carry on all the activities of life either in the pervading silence itself or at least with that as the support and background. The silence remains behind and there is the necessary action on the surface or the silence is our wide self and somewhere in it an active Power does the works of Nature without

disturbing the silence. It is therefore quite right to suspend the work while the visitation of the experience is there—the development of this inner silent consciousness is sufficiently important to justify a brief interruption or pause." (CWSA 30: 259)

3.

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

4.

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

5.

"For the sake of sadhana and for the sake of work, it is always better to *work silently*." (CWM 14: 321)

6.

"When there is some work to do, the less one speaks of it the better it is." (CWM 14: 321)

7.

"Talk as little as possible.

Work as much as you can." (CWM 14: 321)

8.

"X has a very bad habit of coming and talking to people while they are working. If he does not work himself, he should at least allow others to work conscientiously.

So if he comes again to talk while you are working, you had better tell him—'No, not now, we can talk when I have finished my work'." (CWM 14: 321)

XXVIII—Be Absolutely Indifferent to Compliments and Criticisms

1.

"*Then, Mother, what attitude should we have before these spectators?* [Spectators who come to watch the Annual Programme of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education]

To love them with all your heart, my children, and wish that they may be born to the light, that's the only thing, that's the only way of solving the problem. If they begin to talk thoughtlessly, you can be polite and not contradict them—not say anything at all to them. You must avoid above all discussing and trying to convince them, because that's an impossible attempt. You must be absolutely indifferent to their compliments and their criticisms. It is much easier to be indifferent to criticism than to compliments.

When Mme. David-Neel—I have spoken to you about her, haven't I? Mme. David-Neel who is a militant Buddhist and a great Buddhistic luminary—when she came to India she went to meet some of those great sages or gurus—I shan't give you the names, but she went to one who looked at her and asked her... for they were speaking of yoga and personal effort and all that... he looked at her and asked her, 'Are you indifferent to criticism?' Then she answered

him with the classical expression, 'Does one care about a dog's barking?' But she added to me when telling me the story, very wittily: 'Fortunately he did not ask me whether I was indifferent to compliments, because *that* is much more difficult!' " (CWM 7: 387–388)

2.

"You need not be so much concerned as to what others in the Asram may think about you or say to you. It is only what the Mother says to you or thinks about you that has any importance.

All you need to be concerned with is your own work and sadhana, whether you do it well and sincerely and with the right spirit. As to that the Mother alone can judge; you should not be troubled or moved by the praise or blame of others." (CWSA 32: 417)

XXIX—Work That Spiritually Purifies

1.

"The only work that spiritually purifies is that which is done without personal motives, without desire for fame or public recognition or worldly greatness, without insistence on one's own mental motives or vital lusts and demands or physical preferences, without vanity or crude self-assertion or claim for position or prestige, done for the sake of the Divine alone and at the command of the Divine. All work done in an egoistic spirit, however good for people in the world of the Ignorance, is of no avail to the seeker of the Yoga." (CWSA 29: 232)

2.

"It is to purify your own heart that you must work, instead of passing your time in judging what others do or don't do." (CWM 16: 189)

XXX—To Act Without Desire or Ego, Moved by a Higher Force

1.

"*Is it always necessary for our work to be prompted or initiated by the Mother in an outward way? Could one not feel so intensely that a thing has to be done that it is almost an inner prompting?*

It would be dangerous to take every 'inner prompting' as if it were a prompting or initiation of action from the Mother. What seems an inner prompting may come from anywhere, any Force good or bad seeking to fulfil itself.

One may have ego about the work even if the work itself comes from the Mother. The ego of the instrument is one of the things against which there must be special care in the Yoga.

When one is doing the work, usually the urge of the force that works and the preoccupation of doing it and getting it done or the pleasure of doing it are sufficient and the mind does not think of anything else. Afterwards the sense of 'I did it' comes up. With some however the ego is active during the work itself." (CWSA 32: 260–261)

2.

"*In order to separate the being from the constant interference of the ego, I propose to do only those actions*

that I feel are one with the Mother's will. I know that the ego will still present itself, but it will be easy to recognise its interference as something coming from outside.

Of course it is a way. But one has still to be careful about the ego. Even people who sincerely think they are doing only the Mother's will are yet actuated by ego without knowing it." (CWSA 32: 261)

3.

"*Sweet Mother, it is written here: 'In the path of works action is the knot we have first to loosen.'*

The Synthesis of Yoga

Why is action a knot?

Because one is attached to action. The knot is the knot of the ego. You act because of desire. Sri Aurobindo says this, doesn't he? The ordinary way of acting is tied to desire in one form or another—a desire, a need—so that is the knot. If you act only to satisfy desire—a desire which you call a need or a necessity or anything else, but in truth, if you go to the very root of the thing, you see that it is the impulse of a desire which makes you act—well, if you act only under the effect of the impulse of desire, you will no longer be able to act when you eliminate the desire.

And this is the first answer people give you. When they are told, 'Act without being attached to the result of action, have this consciousness that it is not you who are acting, it is the Divine who is acting', the reply which ninety-nine and a half per cent give is, 'But if I feel like that, I don't move any longer! I don't do anything any more; it is always a need, a desire, a personal impulse which makes me act in one way or another.' So Sri Aurobindo says, if you want to realise this teaching of the Gita, the first thing to do is to loosen this knot, the knot binding action to desire—so firmly tied are they that if you take away one you take away the other. He says the knot must be loosened in order to be able to remove desire and yet continue to act." (CWM 8: 70)

4.

"And this is a fact, this is what must be done. The knot must be loosened. It is a small inner operation which you can very easily perform; and when it has been performed, you realise that you act absolutely without any personal motive, but moved by a Force higher than your egoistic force, and also more powerful. And then you act, but the consequences of action no longer return upon you.

This is a wonderful phenomenon of consciousness, and quite concrete. In life you do something—whatever you do, good, bad, indifferent, it doesn't matter—whatever it may be, it immediately has a series of consequences. In

fact you do it to obtain a certain result, that is why you act, with an eye to the result. For example, if I stretch out my hand like this to take the mike, I am looking for the result, you see, to make sounds in the mike. And there is always a consequence, always. But if you loosen the knot and let a Force coming from above—or elsewhere—act through you and make you do things, though there are consequences of your action, they don't come to you any longer, for it was not you who initiated the action, it was the Force from above. And the consequences pass above, or else they are guided, willed, directed, controlled by the Force which made you act. And you feel *absolutely* free, nothing comes back to you of the result of what you have done.

There are people who have had this experience—but these things come first in a flash, for a moment, and then withdraw; it is only when one is quite ready for the transformation that this comes and is established—well, some people have had this experience once, perhaps for a few seconds in their lives, they have had the experience; and then the movement has been withdrawn, the state of consciousness has withdrawn; but the memory remains." (CWM 8: 71)

5.

"Works done in this spirit [work done for the Divine] are quite as effective as bhakti or contemplation. One gets by the rejection of desire, rajas and ego a quietude and purity

into which the Peace ineffable can descend; one gets by the dedication of one's will to the Divine, by the merging of one's will in the Divine Will the death of ego and the enlarging into the cosmic consciousness or else the uplifting into what is above the cosmic; one experiences the separation of Purusha from Prakriti and is liberated from the shackles of the outer nature; one becomes aware of one's inner being and feels the outer as an instrument; one feels the universal Force doing one's works and the Self or Purusha watching or witness but free; one feels all one's works taken from one and done by the universal or the supreme Mother or by the Divine Power controlling and acting from behind the heart. By constant reference of all one's will and works to the Divine, love and adoration grow, the psychic being comes forward. By the reference to the Power above we can come to feel it above and its descent and the opening to an increasing consciousness and knowledge. Finally works, bhakti and knowledge join together and self-perfection becomes possible—what we call the transformation of the nature.

These results certainly do not come all at once; they come more or less slowly, more or less completely according to the condition and growth of the being. There is no royal road to the divine realisation." (CWSA 29: 217–218)

6.

"As for working, it depends on what you mean by the word. Desire often leads either to excess of effort, meaning often much labour and a limited fruit, with strain, exhaustion and in case of difficulty or failure despondence, disbelief or revolt; ... But for you what I would recommend is constant openness, a quiet steady aspiration, no over-eagerness, a cheerful trust and patience." (CWSA 29: 275)

XXXI—Spiritually There Is No Big Work or Small Work

1.

"Of course the idea of bigness and smallness is quite foreign to the spiritual truth. Spiritually there is nothing big or small. Such ideas are like those of the literary people who think writing a poem is a high work and making shoes or cooking the dinner is a small and low one. But all is equal in the eyes of the Spirit— and it is only the spirit within with which it is done that matters. It is the same with a particular kind of work, there is nothing big or small." (CWSA 29: 247)

2.

"You take up some work which is quite material, like cleaning the floor or dusting a room; well, it seems to me that this work can lead to a very deep consciousness if it is done with a certain feeling for perfection and progress; while other work considered of a higher kind as, for example, studies or literary and artistic work, if done with the idea of seeking fame or for the satisfaction of one's vanity or for some material gain, will not help you to progress. So this is already a kind of classification which depends more on the inner attitude than on the outer fact. But this classification can be applied to everything." (CWM 8: 160)

3.

"The progress in sadhana comes from the rectification of the inner and outer attitude, not from the nature of the work one does—any work, even the most humble, can lead to the Divine if it is done with the right attitude." (CWM 14: 300)

4.

"If someone comes to tell me, 'I come to work, I come to make myself useful', it is all right. But if someone comes and says, 'I have many difficulties outside, I can't manage to overcome these difficulties, I want to come here because it will help me', I say, 'No, no, it will be *much* more difficult here; your difficulties will increase *considerably*.' And that is what it means, because they are no longer isolated difficulties; they are collective difficulties.

...

So when people come and tell me, 'I come here for peace, quietness, leisure, to do my yoga', I say, 'No, no, no! Go away immediately somewhere else, you will be much more peaceful anywhere else than here.'

If someone comes and says, 'Well, here I am, I feel that I should consecrate myself to the divine Work, I am ready to do any work at all that you give me', then I say, 'Good, that's all right. If you have goodwill, endurance, and some capacity, it is all right. But to find the solitude necessary for your inner development it is better to go

somewhere else, *anywhere else*, but not here'." (CWM 7: 411)

5.

"What is good work and what is bad or less good work? All is the Mother's work and equal in the Mother's eyes." (CWSA 32: 412)

6.

"All kinds of work are equal before the Divine and all men have the same Brahman within them, is one truth, but that development is not equal in all is another." (CWSA 35: 192)

7.

"All work is equal—those who write or embroider are in no way superior to those who cook or prepare the grains. To speak otherwise is ignorance." (CWSA 35: 753)

XXXII—Work with Enthusiasm

1.

"One must be able to do the same work always with enthusiasm and at the same time be ready to do something else or enlarge one's scope at a moment's notice." (CWSA 29: 248)

2.

"The vital being in us is the seat of impulses and desires, of enthusiasm and violence, of dynamic energy and desperate depressions, of passions and revolts. It can set everything in motion, build and realise, but it can also destroy and mar everything. Thus it may be the most difficult part to discipline in the human being. It is a long and exacting labour requiring great patience and perfect sincerity, for without sincerity you will deceive yourself from the very outset, and all endeavour for progress will be in vain. With the collaboration of the vital no realisation seems impossible, no transformation impracticable. But the difficulty lies in securing this constant collaboration. The vital is a good worker, but most often it seeks its own satisfaction. If that is refused, totally or even partially, the vital gets vexed, sulks and goes on strike. Its energy disappears more or less completely and in its place leaves disgust for people and things, discouragement or revolt, depression and dissatisfaction. At such moments it is good

to remain quiet and refuse to act; for these are the times when one does stupid things and in a few moments one can destroy or spoil the progress that has been made during months of regular effort. These crises are shorter and less dangerous for those who have established a contact with their psychic being which is sufficient to keep alive in them the flame of aspiration and the consciousness of the ideal to be realised. They can, with the help of this consciousness, deal with their vital as one deals with a rebellious child, with patience and perseverance, showing it the truth and light, endeavouring to convince it and awaken in it the goodwill which has been veiled for a time. By means of such patient intervention each crisis can be turned into a new progress, into one more step towards the goal. Progress may be slow, relapses may be frequent, but if a courageous will is maintained, one is sure to triumph one day and see all difficulties melt and vanish before the radiance of the truth-consciousness." (CWM 12: 6–7)

XXXIII—One Can Learn to Find Interest in Everything One Does

1.

"In work too there is an austerity. It consists in not having any preferences and in doing everything one does with interest. For one who wants to grow in self-perfection, there are no great or small tasks, none that are important or unimportant; all are equally useful for one who aspires for progress and self-mastery. It is said that one only does well what one is interested in doing. This is true, but it is truer still that one can learn to find interest in everything one does, even in what appear to be the most insignificant chores. The secret of this attainment lies in the urge towards self-perfection. Whatever occupation or task falls to your lot, you must do it with a will to progress; whatever one does, one must not only do it as best one can but strive to do it better and better in a constant effort for perfection. In this way everything without exception becomes interesting, from the most material chore to the most artistic and intellectual work. The scope for progress is infinite and can be applied to the smallest thing.

This leads us quite naturally to liberation in action. For, in one's action, one must be free from all social conventions, all moral prejudices. However, this does not mean that one should lead a life of licence and dissoluteness." (CWM 12:53–54)

2.

"*When I was working in the Satyagraha movement, I worked with a zeal and energy I don't seem to have here. Is it because there is no fighting programme except against one's own self? How can I recover my interest and vigour in work?*

The Satyagraha was one of those movements in which the vital part of the nature gets easily enthusiastic and interested—it meant a fight on the vital level (its only difference from other revolutionary activities being its 'non-violent' character), with universal support and applause and approval, a nationwide excitement behind you, the sense of heroism and possible martyrdom, a 'moral' ideal giving a farther support of strong self-approbation and the sense of righteousness. Here there is nothing that ministers to the human vital nature; the work is small, silent, shut off from the outside world and its circumstances, of value only as a field for spiritual self-culture. If one is governed by the sole spiritual motive and has the spiritual consciousness, one can take joy and interest in this work. Or if, in spite of his human shortcomings, the worker is mainly bent on spiritual progress and self-perfection, then also he can take interest in the work and both feel its utility for the discovery and purification of his egoistic mental and vital and physical nature and take joy in it as a service of the Divine." (CWSA 35: 751)

XXXIV—To Work Well

1.

"*Z found the shuttering perfect; he said it could not have been done better.*

Are you so sure?

If you want to learn to work *really well*, you must be modest, become aware of your imperfections and always maintain the will to progress.

One does not progress through boasting." (CWM 17: 164)

2.

"To do good work one must have good taste.

Taste can be educated by study and the help of those who have good taste.

To learn, it is necessary to feel first that one does not know." (CWM 12: 129)

3.

"Do the work with all your heart and as best you can and my help and my blessings will always be with you." (CWM 14: 326)

4.

"As for the actual action, a smooth, harmonious working is generally better than the difficulties created by too rigid

principles, but that also is not absolute—and the ideal condition is at each occasion to receive in the inner silence the guidance from above.

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

5.

"All work must be play, but a divine play, played for the Divine, with the Divine." (CWM 14: 326)

6.

"With a quiet mind and a peaceful heart, let us do the work happily." (CWM 14: 326)

7.

"Any work done with care becomes interesting." (CWM 14: 305)

8.

(*Anniversary message for the Ashram Typewriting Service*)

"Blessings for all who work with conscience, good will, regularity and good taste and for all who want to learn and progress." (CWM 14: 326)

9.

"I advise you to sleep well and to take enough rest. This is indispensable in order to be able to keep doing the work regularly and well." (CWM 15: 130)

10.

"Hurried work is always bad work; time must be given if you want good result." (CWM 15: 269)

11.

"Always do with pleasure the work you have to do.

Work done with joy is work done well." (CWM 16: 113)

12.

"Yes, my dear little child, I am always with you to help you, to support you, to guide you. By doing your work with conscientiousness, honesty and perseverance, you will feel my presence closer and closer to you.

With my blessings." (CWM 16: 141)

13.

"When you are doing your work, you should concentrate only on your work and not on the people—there is no need to speak to them or pay any attention to them." (CWM 17: 139)

XXXV—Increase One's Power of Concentration to Work Well

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 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)

3.

"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)

4.

"Concentrate on your work—it is that that gives you strength." (CWM 14: 317)

5.

"Concentration is necessary. By dhyana you awake the inner being; by concentration in life, in work, in the outer consciousness you make the outer being also fit to receive the Divine Light and Force." (CWSA 29: 298)

6.

"*Mother, do You know that I am thinking all the time about the work—which perhaps is not very good.*

On the contrary, it is very good; it teaches you to concentrate." (CWM 17: 166)

XXXVI—Work Can Be Done Well by Being Impersonal

1.

"Your difficulty in work is that you regard it too much as your work and from your personal point of view. So questions of personal convenience, ideas, way of doing things, prestige, demands take a big place—and the result is quarrels. You have to learn to be impersonal. Even in the world work cannot be well done without that. How much more necessary is it for a sadhak of Yoga!" (CWSA 29: 245)

2.

"To be impersonal, generally, is not to be ego-centric, not to regard things from the point of view of how they affect oneself, —but to see what things are in themselves, to judge impartially, to do what is demanded by the purpose of things or by the will of the Master of things, not by one's own personal point of view or egoistic interest or ego-formed idea or feeling. In work it is to do what is best for the work, without regard to one's own prestige or convenience, not to regard the work as one's own but as the Mother's, to do it according to rule, discipline, impersonal arrangement, even if conditions are not favourable to do the best according to the conditions etc. etc. The impersonal worker puts his best capacity, zeal, industry into the work, but not his personal ambitions,

vanity, passions. He has always something in view that is greater than his little personality and his devotion or obedience to that dictates his conduct.” (CWSA 29: 244–245)

XXXVII—If You Want to Work Well, You Must Become the Work Instead of Observing Yourself Doing It

1.

"One may try to forget oneself in an ever more absorbing work, that is, do what one does as a consecration to the Divine, altogether disinterestedly, but with a plenitude, a self-giving, a total self-forgetfulness: no longer thinking about oneself but about what one is doing. 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.

Take someone who is writing a book, for instance. If he looks at himself writing the book, you can't imagine how dull the book will become; it smells immediately of the small human personality which is there and it loses all its value. When a painter paints a picture, if he observes himself painting the picture, the picture will never be good, it will always be a kind of projection of the painter's personality; it will be without life, without force, without beauty. But if, all of a sudden, he becomes the thing he wants to express, if he becomes the brushes, the painting, the canvas, the subject, the image, the colours, the value, the whole thing, and is entirely inside it and lives it, he will make something magnificent.

For everything, everything, it is the same. There is nothing which cannot be a yogic discipline if one does it properly. And if it is not done properly, even tapasya will be of no use and will lead you nowhere. For it is the same

thing, if you do your tapasya, all the time observing yourself doing it and telling yourself, 'Am I making any progress, is this going to be better, am I going to succeed?', then it is your ego, you know, which becomes more and more enormous and occupies the whole place, and there is no room for anything else. And we said the other day that the spiritual ego is the worst of all, for it is altogether unconscious of its inferiority, it is convinced it is something very superior, if not absolutely divine!" (CWM 4: 362–363)

XXXVIII—As Work Is the Mother's or the Divine's Work, It Has to Be Done Well and in the Right Way

1.

"What you write is no doubt correct. There are very wrong ideas in the minds of the workers and not at all the right attitude. But we have not to do the work for the satisfaction of the sadhaks, but rather because it is the Mother's work, the divine work and it has to be done well and in the right way. If the workers or others are not satisfied, it has still to be done well and in the right way. When their nature changes and they see their mistake, then they will recognise the truth and change their attitude. Some have good will and have only to learn to see more clearly and get free from their mental misjudgments. Others are more obscure and egoistic and will take more time to get the right poise. Till that happens, we must go on with a quiet firmness and resolution and a great patience." (CWSA 32: 416)

XXXIX—Success in Work

1.

"It is very satisfying to have closed so well the work you undertook for the Mother, overcoming all difficulties and ending in such a satisfactory result. But your work for the Mother is always sure to be the same, thorough, conscientious [meticulous] and skilful and inspired by a firm faith and openness to her force; where these things are, success is always sure." (CWSA 32: 414)

XL—Bear Criticism, See One's Mistakes to Arrive at the Fullness of One's Capacity

1.

"That is a great error of the human vital—to want compliments for their own sake and to be depressed by their absence and imagine that it means there is no capacity. In this world one starts with ignorance and imperfection in whatever one does —one has to find out one's mistakes and to learn, one has to commit errors and find out by correcting them the right way to do things. Nobody in the world has ever escaped from this law. So what one has to expect from others is not compliments all the time, but praise of what is right or well done and criticism of errors and mistakes. The more one can bear criticism and see one's mistakes, the more likely one is to arrive at the fullness of one's capacity. Especially when one is very young—before the age of maturity—one cannot easily do perfect work. What is called the juvenile work of poets and painters—work done in their early years—is always imperfect, it is a promise and has qualities—but the real perfection and full use of their powers comes afterwards. They themselves know that very well, but they go on writing or painting because they know also that by doing so they will develop their powers.

As for comparison with others, one ought not to do that. Each one has his own lesson to learn, his own work

to do and he must concern himself with that, not with the superior or inferior progress of others in comparison with himself. If he is behind today, he can be in full capacity hereafter and it is for that future perfection of his powers that he must labour. You are young and have everything yet to learn—your capacities are yet only in bud, you must wait and work for them to be in full bloom—and you must not mind if it takes months and years even to arrive at something satisfying and perfect. It will come in its proper time, and the work you do now is always a step towards it.

But learn to welcome criticism and the pointing out of imperfections—the more you do so, the more rapidly you will advance." (CWSA 29: 286)

2.

"Someone who is learning to paint or play music or write and does not like to have his mistakes pointed out by those who already know—how is he to learn at all or reach any perfection of technique?" (CWSA 29: 287)

3.

"I have read your letters and am well satisfied with the confidence you have in your capacity to do the work. It is true that you have the capacity, but you will agree that there is a difference between having the capacity and having the knowledge; and to have the knowledge of a work it must be learned.

So you must first learn from those who know and the best way of learning is to see them do. When you will know and have proved your thoroughness, steadiness and faithfulness in doing the work, then I will entrust you with the full responsibility and give you the entire management of the work." (CWM 13: 161)

4.

"There are honest people but they do not have the capacity to work. There are capable people but they are not honest in their work. When I find someone both honest and capable he becomes very precious." (CWM 13: 161)

XLI—Success in Work Comes Due to Divine Forces

1.

"All the materialism and positivism in the world have been constructed just because people do not want the divine Grace to come in at all. If they are cured they want to say, 'It is *I* who cured myself'; if they make a progress, they want to think, 'It is *I* who have progressed'; if they organise something, they want to proclaim, 'It is *I* who am organising.' And many, many of those who try to do otherwise, if they look within themselves, would see how seldom spontaneously, sincerely (not as when one says something because one knows it should be said, or as one thinks something because it is the fashion to think like that but spontaneously, sincerely, with all their heart) they *know* that it is not they who have done the thing, but the divine force. When they have made a progress, when they have changed something in themselves, when they have learnt something, then when is it that spontaneously, without an effort of will, without thinking, without needing to tell oneself, 'One ought to think like this', spontaneously one *knows* that without the divine force nothing would have been done? Look into yourself, it is a very interesting thing, very interesting, how many times a day you think (without even telling yourself), 'I have done this', 'I have been able to do that', 'I succeeded in this', 'I failed in that', and when you have made a good effort, when you have

obtained a result, you need a little moment for thought, or more, to tell yourself, 'If the divine force had not helped me, probably I would not have been able to do it.' The spontaneous thing is, 'Oh! I have succeeded', isn't that true? There is indeed a part of the mind which has been educated, which has learnt, has reflected, understood, which is well-disposed and truly feels that in reality it is like that, but this is only one part of the mind, and it is not always active, sometimes it must be called up, asked its advice, 'What is then the best attitude to have?', 'What should I think?' I believe all who have taken up yoga, if they are sincere, if they reflect for a moment, tell themselves, 'I was not aware of it, but if I have succeeded, it was probably because the divine forces were there to help me, otherwise I would not have been able to succeed.' This is well understood. But there comes a moment when one knows that one would not have been able to lift a finger if these forces had not been there. That comes later." (CWM 4: 279–280)

2.

"But to begin with, how many times, if one thinks, if one quite simply observes oneself, does one catch oneself saying, 'It is I!' And, then, one congratulates oneself sometimes, one says, 'After all I can do something, I am capable!' I am going further: how many people would be capable of doing anything at all if simply deprived of the

pleasure of being able to tell themselves, 'I have done this, I have realised that, I have made a progress, how well I played this game'? How many people would be able to sincerely do something if this pleasure were taken away? I have known individuals whose mind was much more developed than the rest of the being, they had understood very well (almost too well); they sat down to meditate and all their energy was gone, all vitality evaporated into a kind of peace, not unpleasant, but very still. There is no more need to do anything, no longer any need to move, one dreams.... Under a tree, arms crossed, one leaves the Divine to do everything for oneself, even feeding you if you need it. This is perhaps very well, but this shows that the instrument is not ready; it is not really at the service of the Divine, it is at the service of the ego, and when the ego is taken away, it does nothing any longer. Therefore, so long as one lives in the ego this illusion is necessary to make you act; it is necessary to keep up action until one is completely transformed or, in any case, till the true consciousness is established." (CWM 4: 280–281)

3.

"To observe whether it [*one's work*] is really well done or not and feel the Ananda of work done for the Mother [*is the right attitude*]. Get rid of the 'I'. If it is well done, it is the Force that did it and your only part was to be a good or a bad instrument." (CWSA 29: 270)

XLII—Place Your Will at the Disposal of the Divine to Do the Best Thing in the Best Possible Way

1.

"You may not know at every moment what is the best thing to do or how to do it, but you can place your will at the disposal of the Divine to do the best possible, the best thing possible. You will see it will have marvellous results. Do this with consciousness, sincerity and perseverance, and you will find yourself getting along with gigantic strides. It is like that, isn't it? One must do things with all the ardour of one's soul, with all the strength of one's will; do at every moment the best possible, the best thing possible. What others do is not your concern—this is something I shall never be able to repeat to you often enough." (CWSA 4: 117)

2.

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

3.

"I knew a young woman who was a theosophist and was trying to practise; she told me, 'We are taught that the divine Will must prevail in all that we do, but in the morning when I have my breakfast, how can I know whether God wants me to put two lumps of sugar in my coffee or only one?'... And it was quite touching, you know, and I had some trouble explaining to her that the spirit in which she drank her coffee, the attitude she had towards her food, was much more important than the number of lumps of sugar she put into it.

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

spontaneous, dictated by something other than an outer reason. But that is an ideal — for which one must aspire and which one can realise after some time. Till then, to take care always to keep the true attitude, the true aspiration, is much more important than to decide whether one will do gymnastic marching or not and whether one will go to a certain class or not. Because these things have no real importance in themselves, they have only an altogether relative importance, the only important thing is just to keep the true orientation in one's aspiration and a living will for progress." (CWM 9: 30–31)

4.

"If in all sincerity one acts only to express the Divine Will, all actions without exception can become unselfish. But as long as this state has not been reached, there are actions which are more favourable for the contact with the Divine." (CWM 14: 325)

XLIII—Be Ready to Do Any Work and Not Only the Work One Prefers

1.

"The sadhak ought to be ready to do any work that is needed, not only the work he prefers." (CWSA 29: 248)

2.

"It is not that you have to do what you dislike, but that you have to cease to dislike. To do only what you like is to indulge the vital and maintain its domination over the nature—for that is the very principle of the untransformed nature, to be governed by its likes and dislikes. To be able to do anything with equanimity is the principle of karmayoga and to do it with joy because it is done for the Mother is the true psychic and vital condition in this Yoga." (CWSA 29: 248)

3.

"To choose without preference and execute without desire is the great difficulty at the very root of the development of true consciousness and self-control. To choose in this sense means to see what is true and bring it into existence; and to choose thus, without the least personal bias for any thing, any person, action, circumstance, is exactly what is most difficult for an ordinary human being. Yet one must learn to act without any preference, free from all

attractions and likings, taking one's stand solely on the Truth which guides. And having chosen in accordance with the Truth the necessary action, one must carry it out without any desire.

If you observe yourself attentively, you will see that before acting you need an inner impetus, something which pushes you. In the ordinary man this impetus is generally desire. This desire ought to be replaced by a clear, precise, constant vision of the Truth.

Some call this the Voice of God or the Will of God. The true meaning of these words has been falsified, so I prefer to speak of 'the Truth', though this is but a very limited aspect of That which we cannot name but which is the Source and the Goal of all existence. I deliberately do not use the word God because religions have given this name to an all-powerful being who is other than his creation and outside it. This is not correct.

However, on the physical plane the difference is obvious. For we are yet all that we no longer want to be, and He, He is all that we want to become." (CWM 4: 1–2)

4.

"Unless you can rise above your personal ideas, opinions and preferences, you cannot become a good worker. As long as you have your personal preferences, you will not be able to do the exact thing needed." (CWM 14: 314)

5.

"*Mother, which is this being that receives happily any work from You? Which is this being that loves You?*

It is that part of your being which is under the influence of the psychic and obeys the Divine impulsion." (CWM 16: 179)

XLIV—The Majority Find Sadhana through Work the Easiest of All

1.

"Why argue from your personal experience great or little and turn it into a generalisation? A great many people (the majority perhaps) find it [*sadhana through work*] the easiest of all. Many find it easy to think of the Mother when working; but when they read or write, their mind goes off to the thing read or written and they forget everything else. I think that is the case with most. Physical work on the other hand can be done with the most external part of the mind, leaving the rest free to remember or to experience." (CWSA 29: 218)

2.

"Demands should not be made. What you receive freely from the Mother helps you; what you demand or try to impose on her is bound to be empty of her force.

The Mother deals with each person differently according to his true need (not what he himself fancies to be his need) and his progress in the sadhana and his nature.

For you the most effective way to get the strength you need would be to do the work conscientiously and scrupulously, allowing nothing to interfere with its exact discharge. If you did that, opening yourself at the same

time to the Mother in your work, you would receive more constantly the grace and would come to feel her power doing the work through you; you would thus be able to live constantly with the sense of her presence. If on the contrary you allow your fancies or desires to interfere with your work or are careless and negligent, you interrupt the flow of her grace and give room for sorrow and uneasiness and other foreign forces to enter into you. Yoga through work is the easiest and most effective way to enter into the stream of this sadhana." (CWSA 32: 256–257)

XLV—Some Can Prepare Only by Work in Yoga

1.

"It [*the value of work in sadhana*] depends more on the intensity of the spirit put into it than on the intensity of the work itself. As for the line on which most stress is laid, it depends on the nature. There are some people who are not cut out for meditation and it is only by work that they can prepare themselves; there are also those who are the opposite. As for the enormous development of egoism, that can come whatever one follows. I have seen it blossom in the *dhyānī* as well as in the worker; Krishnaprem says it does so in the bhakta. So it is evident that all soils are favourable to this Narcissus flower. As for 'no need of sadhana', obviously one who does not do any sadhana cannot change or progress. Work, meditation, bhakti, all must be done as sadhana." (CWSA 29: 209)

2.

"It does not depend on sitting [*to meditate*]. Many don't sit. They become conscious by working." (CWSA 29: 222)

3.

"There are some who cannot meditate and progress through work only. Each has his own nature. But to extend one method to all is always an error." (CWSA 29: 222) (CWSA 35: 748)

4.

"There are very few among the sadhaks here who at all concern themselves with the supermind or know anything about it except as something which the Mother and I will bring down some day and establish here. Most are seeking realisation through meditation, through love and worship or through activity and work. Meditation and silence are not necessary for everyone; there are some, even among those spoken of by you and others as the most advanced sadhaks, who do their sadhana not through meditation, for which they have no turn, but through activity, work or creation supported or founded on love and bhakti. It is not the credo but the person who matters. We impose no credo; it is sufficient if there is an established and heart-felt relation between ourselves and the disciple." (CWSA 29: 210)

5.

"There are several sadhaks who have advanced very far by work alone, work consecrated to the Mother or else by work mainly with very little time for meditation. Others have advanced far by meditation mainly, but work also. Those who tried to do meditation alone and became impatient of work (because they could not consecrate it to the Mother) have generally been failures like X and Y. But one or two may succeed by meditation alone—if it is in their nature or if they have an intense and unshakable faith

and bhakti. All depends on the nature of the sadhak." (CWSA 29: 222–223)

6.

"What we are seeking is to be concentrated on the Divine in all that we do, at all times, in all our acts and in every movement. There are some here who have been told to meditate; but also there are others who have not been asked to do any meditation at all. But it must not be thought that they are not progressing. They too follow a discipline, but it is of another nature. To work, to act with devotion and an inner consecration is also a spiritual discipline. The final aim is to be in constant union with the Divine, not only in meditation but in all circumstances and in all the active life." (CWSA 3: 20)

XLVI—How Work Helps in Sadhana

1.

"The object of the sadhana is opening of the consciousness to the Divine and the change of the nature. Meditation or contemplation is one means to this but only one means; bhakti is another; work is another. Chittashuddhi was practised by the Yogis as a first means towards realisation and they got by it the saintliness of the saint and the quietude of the sage. But the transformation of the nature of which we speak is something more than that, and this transformation does not come by contemplation alone; works are necessary, Yoga in action is indispensable." (CWSA 29: 208)

2.

"Peace is the true remedy; distraction by hard work is only a temporary relief—although a certain amount of work is necessary for the proper balance of the different parts of the being." (CWSA 29: 126)

3.

"There are people who have spent entire lifetimes seated in contemplation and attained nothing. There are people (we have well-known examples) who used to do the most modest of manual works, like a cobbler mending old shoes, and who had an experience." (CWM 6: 26)

4.

"*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)

5.

"*Sometimes when I am absorbed in meditation I see and feel that my physical being aspires through work. Then I see a sun manifesting in my physical with its brilliant light. All the gods and forces emanating from You are in this sun.*

Yes, it is true that in and through work one can enter into contact with the sun of divine light and force." (CWM 14: 298)

6.

"Whatever is our work and whatever we do, we must do it sincerely, honestly, scrupulously, not in view of any personal profit, but as an offering to the Divine, with an entire consecration of our being. If this attitude is sincerely kept in all circumstances, whenever we need to learn something to do the work more effectively, the occasion to acquire this knowledge comes to us and we have only to take advantage of the opportunity." (CWM 14: 301)

7.

"*Sometimes I fear that the rigidity of my nature does not allow you to act properly in me.*

But through work the nature becomes less rigid, more plastic and supple." (CWM 14: 315–316)

XLVII—To Overcome the Ego Motive in the Work, Take the Inner Motive of Self-giving

1.

"Human nature has always been egoistic in its basis and so it brings in the ego motive into the work for the Divine also. That can only be overcome slowly, for what is ingrained in the human vital nature and has been active through hundreds of lives cannot disappear at once. To be conscious and to have the steady will to change and make the inner motive of bhakti and self-giving prevail over the outer motives is the one thing necessary." (CWSA 31: 219)

2.

"*Sweet Mother, is personal effort always egoistic?*

...

There may be an effort which is not at all selfish and is yet egoistic, because the moment it becomes personal it is egoistic—that means, it is based on the ego. But this does not mean that it is not generous, compassionate, unselfish nor that it is for narrow personal ends. It is not like that. It may be for a very unselfish work. But so long as an ego is there it is egoistic. And so long as the sense of one's own personality is there, it is naturally something egoistic; it is founded on the presence of the ego.

And this must last for a fairly long time, because it must last until the individuality is completely formed, until it has reached a certain state of individual perfection; then the presence of the ego is no longer necessary—but not before one has attained the maximum individual development." (CWM 7: 366)

3.

"Even in their sadhana the I is always there,—*my* sadhana, *my* progress, my everything. The remedy is to think constantly of the Divine, not of oneself, to work, act, do sadhana for the Divine,—not to consider how this or that affects *me* personally, not claim anything, but to refer all to the Divine. It will take time to do that sincerely and thoroughly, but it is the proper way." (CWSA 35: 663)

4.

"*A sense was coming down from above that I belong to the Above, but have come down upon earth for a mission to work out — deputed here as an instrument of the Above for the works of the Above.*

The work is the work of the Divine and it is best to regard oneself as an instrument. The word mission is apt to accentuate the sense of ego and should be avoided." (CWSA 35: 747)

XLVIII—Signs of the Consecration of the Vital in Action

1.

"The signs of the consecration of the vital in action are these among others:

The feeling (not merely the idea or the aspiration) that all the life and the work are the Mother's and a strong joy of the vital nature in this consecration and surrender. A consequent calm content and disappearance of egoistic attachment to the work and its personal results, but at the same time a great joy in the work and in the use of the capacities for the divine purpose.

The feeling that the Divine Force is working behind one's actions and leading at every moment.

A persistent faith which no circumstance or event can break. If difficulties occur, they raise not mental doubts or an inert acquiescence, but the firm belief that, with sincere consecration, the Divine Shakti will remove the difficulties, and with this belief a greater turning to her and dependence on her for that purpose." (CWSA 29: 233–234)

2.

"You need not have qualms about the time you give to action and creative work. Those who have an expansive creative vital or a vital made for action are usually at their best when the vital is not held back from its movement and

they can develop faster by it than by introspective meditation. All that is needed is that the action should be dedicated, so that they may grow by it more and more prepared to feel and follow the Divine Force when it moves them. It is a mistake to think that to live in introspective meditation all the time is invariably the best or the only way of Yoga." (CWSA 29: 221–222)

XLIX—Mental Work and Doing Sadhana

1.

"It is not so easy to do mental work and do sadhana at the same time, for it is with the mind that the sadhana is done. If one gets back from the mind as well as the body and lives in the inner Purusha consciousness, then it is possible." (CWSA 31: 47)

2.

"You can remember at the beginning and offer your reading to the Divine and at the end again. There is a state of consciousness in which only a part of it is reading or doing the work and behind there is the consciousness of the Divine always." (CWSA 31: 64)

3.

"It is more difficult to separate oneself from the mind when it is active than from the body. It is quite possible however for one part of the mind to stand back and remember the Mother and receive her presence and the force while the other is busy with the work. Meanwhile what you are doing is the right way. Remember always that whatever the difficulties the Mother's love is with you and will lead you through." (CWSA 31: 21)

4.

"*Do You think that the tiredness comes from too much mental work?*

No, it comes from *mental tamas*." (CWM 12: 135)

L—To Become Conscious of Whether an Action Is Right or Not

1.

"If you want that [*to become conscious of whether an action is right or not*] very much and aspire for it, it may come in one of several ways—

(1) You may get the habit or faculty of watching your movements in such a way that you see the impulse to action coming and can see too its nature,

(2) a consciousness may come which feels uneasy at once if a wrong thought or impulse to action or feeling is there,

(3) something within you may warn and stop you when you are going to do the wrong action." (CWSA 29: 260–261)

LI—Think of Work While Doing It, Not Before and Not After

1.

"Think of your work only when it is being done, not before and not after.

Do not let your mind go back on a work that is finished. It belongs to the past and all rehandling of it is a waste of power.

Do not let your mind labour in anticipation on a work that has to be done. The Power that acts in you will see to it at its own time.

These two habits of the mind belong to a past functioning that the transforming Force is pressing to remove and the physical mind's persistence in them is the cause of your strain and fatigue. If you can remember to let your mind work only when its action is needed, the strain will lessen and disappear. This is indeed the transitional movement before the supramental working takes possession of the physical mind and brings into it the spontaneous action of the Light." (CWSA 29: 287)

2.

"You take interest in what you do just because you do not know what is going to happen. If you were fully in the know of what is going to happen, I am sure that 999 persons in a 1000 would sit down quietly waiting for it to happen. If

you know exactly what is going to take place, all your enthusiasm would evaporate and in most cases you would say, 'Have I to do all this to get there? Ah, no'!" (CWM 4: 278)

3.

"If you undertake a work and are told beforehand that all will be useless and you will not be able to do what you want, would you do it? No, surely not! Well, it is something like that which happens. Ninety times out of a hundred, what you do does not give the expected result. Not one person in a million would do his work if he were told: 'Do this, but the result will not be at all what you want.' But in the play of forces many must work for the aggregate of forces, for the totality of forces, although individually this work has no personal utility for the one who does it. So, if the individual had the knowledge that the part he plays in the whole is infinitesimal, he would not play it. But the moment you go above that, when you do things, not with a fixed end in view, but because you know within yourself that this is the thing to be done, whatever the result, then with this kind of detachment you know and see in the higher Consciousness that all action is done exclusively because it has to be done whatever may be the result; and generally you are sufficiently clear-sighted to know, at least vaguely, what will be the result of this action. For knowing it will not change in the least your way of doing it.

Instead of an explanation which goes from below upward, it would be wiser to look for an explanation which comes from above downward and rather to conceive that little by little the Consciousness comes down and as it comes down is obscured, and one no longer understands by what mechanism things are done—that is what is called a state of ignorance." (CWM 4: 163–164)

4.

"One of the great things, you see, is just to be able to do something with as much interest, as much intensity, as much energy, while knowing perfectly what the result will be and even if the result is the opposite of what you seem to expect. This is not easy, but still it is indispensable." (CWM 4: 278)

5.

"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." (CWM 6: 402)

6.

"For work the present is the most important thing: the past must not come in the way and the future must not pull you away." (CWM 14: 317)

7.

"Your work can never be good if you go on thinking of the next thing. For work, it is the present that is most important. The past should not drag you behind, the future should not pull you forward. You must be fully concentrated on the present, on what you are doing. You must be so concentrated on what you are doing that it is as if the salvation of the whole world depended only upon your work." (CWM 14: 317)

8.

"Some people look at themselves acting with great complacency and an extreme satisfaction and consider

themselves truly very remarkable. Others, on the contrary, have the critical mind and pass their time criticising themselves all the while. Well, neither is better than the other. They are equally bad. The best thing is not to be occupied with oneself. If one has a work to do, the best is to see to that work and naturally the best way of doing it. This of course is always good. But not to—whether one does it well or not—to look at oneself doing it and appreciate oneself; that is useless.

To discover how to do the work and what is the best way of doing it is very useful. But to look at oneself doing it and admire or belittle oneself, that's not only useless but disastrous." (CWM 7: 19–20)

LII—In Concentration and in the Intensity of the Will Lies the Origin of Joy in Work

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)

2.

"It is only effort, in whatever domain it be — material effort, moral effort, intellectual effort — which creates in the being certain vibrations which enable you to get connected with universal vibrations; and it is this which

gives joy. It is effort which pulls you out of inertia; it is effort which makes you receptive to the universal forces. And the one thing above all which spontaneously gives joy, even to those who do not practise yoga, who have no spiritual aspiration, who lead quite an ordinary life, is the exchange of forces with universal forces. People do not know this, they would not be able to tell you that it is due to this, but so it is." (CWM 4: 32)

3.

"Try to enjoy doing everything you do.

When you are interested in what you do, you enjoy doing it.

To be interested in what you do, you must try to do it better and better.

In progress lies true joy." (CWM 14: 303)

4.

'When work becomes attractive and is done with joy, how much better it is." (CWM 14: 304)

5.

"*My question is this: can this state of greater joy, Sachchidananda, be realised while one is actually doing work?*

Certainly it is realisable in work. Good Lord! how could the integral Yoga exist if it were not?" (CWSA 32: 606)

LIII—Vital Joy Has to Be Replaced by Psychic Gladness in Work

1.

"The reason of the difference of result between the two moods in work is that the first mood is that of a vital joy, while the other is that of a psychic quiet. Vital joy, though it is a very helpful thing for the ordinary human life, is something excited, eager, mobile without a settled basis—that is why it soon gets tired and cannot continue. Vital joy has to be replaced by a quiet settled psychic gladness with the mind and vital very clear and very peaceful. When one works on this basis, then everything becomes glad and easy, in touch with the Mother's force and fatigue or depression do not come." (CWSA 29: 252)

2.

"Part of the physical cannot do without work, another part (more material) finds it an infliction. What gives the force and joy of the work is however not physical but vital." (CWSA 29: 251)

3.

"The vital delight in the work is a necessary element for the work itself. Work done without it is much less easy to do and much less easy to offer." (CWSA 29: 251)

4.

"Most people do things because they have to, not out of the happiness they find in the things. It is only its hobbies and penchants that the nature finds some happiness in, not usually in work—unless of course the work itself is one's hobby or penchant and can be indulged in or dropped as one likes." (CWSA 29: 251)

5.

"Joy and enthusiasm and buoyancy are good things, but it must be on a basis of calm and with the head clear for work." (CWSA 29: 251)

6.

"It is more difficult at this stage for the experiences of Ananda (this felicity seems from your description to be an intense psychic Ananda) to be kept permanently than for peace to remain abidingly. The difficulty of keeping up these states in work or reading is more a matter of habit than anything else, because the mind is accustomed to absorb in the reading or work and forget all else for the time being. But once one gets the right poise and can keep in the inner being during work, that difficulty disappears." (CWSA 30: 540)

7.

"The condition you describe in your work shows that the inner being is awake and that there is now the double

consciousness. It is the inner being which has the inner happiness, the calm and quiet, the silence free from any ripple of thought, the inwardly silent repetition of the name. The automatic repetition of the mantra is part of the same phenomenon—that is what ought to happen to the mantra, it must become a conscious but spontaneous thing repeating itself in the very substance of the consciousness itself, no longer needing any effort of the mind. All these doubts and questionings of the mind are useless. What has to happen is that this inner consciousness should be always there not troubled by any disturbance with the constant silence, inner happiness, calm quietude, etc., while the outer consciousness does what is necessary in the way of work etc. or, what is better, has that done through it—it is the latter experience that you have some days as someone pushing the work with so much continuous force without your feeling tired." (CWSA 30: 232)

8.

"There must be the rasa [*in the work*], but it comes when there is the dynamic descent of the Power." (CWSA 29: 251)

9.

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

the rasa of Peace, of Silence, of inner Light and Bliss, of growing inner Knowledge, of increasing inner Power, of the Divine Love, of all the infinite fields of experience that open to one with the opening of the inner consciousness. The true rasa of poetry, painting or any other activity is truly found when these activities are part of the working of the Divine Force in you and you feel it as that and you feel in it the joy of that working." (CWSA 30: 234)

LIV—Be a Good Cheerful Worker

1.

"This growth I have been observing in you for a fairly long time now and it is in the cheerful states that it is the most active. Japa, thinking of the Divine is all right, but it must be on this basis and in company with work and mental activity, for then the instrument is in a healthy condition. But if you become restlessly eager to do nothing but japa and think of nothing but the Divine and of the 'progress' you have or have not made (Ramana Maharshi says you should never think of "progress", it is according to him a movement of the ego), then all the fat is in the fire—because the system is not yet ready for a Herculean effort and it begins to get upset and think it is unfit and will never be fit. So be a good cheerful worker and offer your bhakti to the Divine in all ways you can but rely on him to work out things in you." (CWSA 31: 203)

LV—To Be Truly Happy in Life, One Must Love Work

1.
"In order to be truly happy in life, *one must love work*." (CWM 12: 337)

2.
"If one does not love work, one is always unhappy in life." (CWM 12: 337)

3.
"Everyone should be taught the joy of doing well whatever he does, whether it is intellectual, artistic or manual work, and above all, the dignity of all work, whatever it may be, when it is done with care and skill." (CWM 12: 368)

4.
"Your attitude towards work is the right one and I see no changes to suggest. The work done through love and because of love is surely the most powerful." (CWM 14: 299)

5.
" *'To Thee all the fervour of my adoration.'*

It is adoration expressing itself in work—all the more precious." (CWM 16: 21)

6.

"Works of love: the best condition for work." (CWM 14: 299)

7.

"My dear child,

When one's attention is always turned towards oneself, one is never happy. When one allows oneself to be ruled by every passing impulse, one is never peaceful.

It is through work and self-mastery that one can find happiness and peace." (CWM 16: 132)

LVI—Descent of Higher Consciousness and Work

1.

"The state of wideness and of quietude unaffected by anything that happens is the natural result of the descent which you saw in this figure. The impartial condition towards work or not work is also a result of this descent. Usually it is the vital that pushes to work and without this vital push one can do very little. When the higher consciousness descends into the mind and vital, this push becomes silent, but the faculty of work remains,—afterwards when the new consciousness is settled it takes up the work and carries it on with another force which replaces the push of the vital and is much greater." (CWSA 30: 491)

2.

"The consciousness is always there above you. It is when one opens oneself and calls it that it descends and works—whether in meditation or in work." (CWSA 30: 442)

3.

"It [*the descent of the higher consciousness into the most physical*] brings light, consciousness, force, Ananda into the cells and all the physical movements. The body becomes conscious and vigilant and performs the right movements, obeying the higher will or else automatically

by force of the consciousness that has come into it. It becomes more possible to control the functionings of the body and set right anything that is wrong, to deal with illness and pain etc. A greater control comes over the actions of the body and even over happenings to it from outside, e.g. minimising of accidents and small mishaps. The body becomes a more effective instrument for work. It becomes possible to minimise fatigue. Peace, happiness, strength, lightness in the whole physical system." (CWSA 30: 493)

LVII—Faultless Planning of Work with the Consciousness of the Divine

1.

"*It seems to me that the proof of sincerity is in work and not in planning.*

This is exactly what I have tried to make them understand—but the tendency to plan and talk seems to be too strong to be checked. Let us hope some work also will be done." (CWM 14: 321)

2.

"Faultless planning of work cannot be obtained except with the consciousness of the Divine." (CWM 14: 307)

LVIII—Action Is Not to Be Renounced as Incompatible with Concentration on the Divine

1.

"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)

LIX—Will Is the Effective Power Behind the Action

1.

"This journey consists in a series of activities continued from life to life in this world with intervals of life in other states. The Life-principle maintains them; it supplies their material in the formative energy which takes shape in them. But their presiding god is not the Life-principle; it is the Will. Will is Kratu, the effective power behind the act. It is of the nature of consciousness; it is energy of consciousness, and although present in all forms, conscious, subconscious or superconscious, vital, physical or mental, yet comes into its kingdom only when it emerges in Mind. It uses the mental faculty of memory to link together and direct consciously the activities towards the goal of the individual.

In man the use of consciousness by the mental will is imperfect, because memory is limited. Our action is both dispersed and circumscribed because mentally we live from hour to hour in the current of Time, holding only to that which attracts or seems immediately useful to our egoistic mind. We live in what we are doing, we do not control what has been done, but are rather controlled by our past works which we have forgotten. This is because we dwell in the action and its fruits instead of living in the soul and viewing the stream of action from behind it. The Lord, the true Will,

stands back from the actions and therefore is their lord and not bound by them.

The Upanishad solemnly invokes the Will to remember the thing that has been done, so as to contain and be conscious of the becoming, so as to become a power of knowledge and self-possession and not only a power of impulsion and self formulation. It will thus more and more approximate itself to the true Will and preside over the co-ordination of the successive lives with a conscious control. Instead of being carried from life to life in a crooked path, as by winds, it will be able to proceed more and more straight in an ordered series, linking life to life with an increasing force of knowledge and direction until it becomes the fully conscious Will moving with illumination on the straight path towards the immortal felicity. The mental will, *kratu*, becomes what it at present only represents, the divine Will, Agni." (CWSA 17: 79–80)

2.

"But as there is in and behind all the falsehoods of our material mind and reason a Light that prepares by this twilight the full dawn of the Truth in man, so there is in and behind all our errors, sins and stumblings a secret Will, tending towards Love and Harmony, which knows where it is going and prepares and combines our crooked branchings towards the straight path which will be the final

result of their toil and seeking. The emergence of this Will and that Light is the condition of immortality.

This Will is Agni. Agni is in the Rig Veda, from which the closing verse of the Upanishad is taken, the flame of the Divine Will or Force of Consciousness working in the worlds. He is described as the immortal in mortals, the leader of the journey, the divine Horse that bears us on the road, the 'son of crookedness' who himself knows and is the straightness and the Truth. Concealed and hard to seize in the workings of this world because they are all falsified by desire and egoism, he uses them to transcend them and emerges as the universal in Man or universal Power, Agni Vaishwanara, who contains in himself all the gods and all the worlds, upholds all the universal workings and finally fulfils the godhead, the Immortality. He is the worker of the divine Work. It is these symbols which govern the sense of the two final verses of the Upanishad." (CWSA 17: 77–78)

LX—True Usefulness of Work Is to Organise Your Cerebral Capacity

1.

"The usefulness of work is nothing else but that: to crystallise this mental power. For, what you learn (unless you put it in practice by some work or deeper studies), half of what you learn, at least, will vanish, disappear with time. But it will leave behind one thing: the capacity of crystallising your thought, making something clear out of it, something precise, exact and organised. And that is the true usefulness of work: to organise your cerebral capacity. If you remain in your hazy movement in that kind of cloudy fluidity, you may labour for years, it will be quite useless to you; you will not come out of it more intelligent than when you entered it. ...

I am going to explain it to you: when you have understood, it forms a little crystal in you, like a little shining point. And when you have put in many, many, many of these, then you will begin to be intelligent. That is the utility of work, not simply to stuff the head with a heap of things that take you nowhere." (CWM 5: 126–127)

2.

"Work of the enlightened mind: it is very powerful for leading the being to the Divine and can be very useful for progress." (CWM 14: 340)

LXI—A Strong Urge to Do Something Means You Are Capable of Doing It

1.

"*Sometimes there are latent powers in us of which we are unaware. To do a work, how is one to know whether one is capable of doing it or not?*

How can one know whether one is capable of doing it or not! By *trying*. That's the best thing. And if you do not succeed immediately, persevere. And you must know that if a strong urge, a very strong urge to do something comes to you, that means this work has something to do with you and you are capable of doing it. But one can have powers which are so well hidden that one has to dig long before finding them. So you must not get discouraged at the first setback, you must persist." (CWM 5: 318–319)

2.

"There is no need for you to change the line of life and work you have chosen so long as you feel that to be the way of your nature (*svabhāva*) or dictated to you by your inner being or, for some reason, it is seen to be your proper dharma. These are the three tests and apart from that I do not know if there is any fixed line of conduct or way of work or life that can be laid down for the yoga of the Gita. It is the spirit or consciousness in which the work is done

that matters most; the outer form can vary greatly for different natures. This, so long as one does not get the settled experience of the Divine Power taking up one's works and doing them; afterwards it is the Power which determines what is to be done or not done." (CWSA 29: 236–237)

3.

"If the sadhak has a strong insistence or a strong desire, the Mother may say 'Yes' or 'Do as you wish' or give her sanction to the thing requested or demanded. That does not make it a *kartavyaṁ karma*, but simply a thing which the sadhak can do. Again if a thing is indifferent or unobjectionable and the Mother is asked by somebody if he can do it, that does not exalt it into a *kartavyaṁ karma*." (CWSA 32: 416)

4.

"People are often blamed for choosing an action for themselves which does not correspond to their abilities. There is a slight confusion here.

Those who freely set out to accomplish their own favourite work cannot, in my opinion, be on the wrong track; this work must surely be the expression of their own particular tendency. But their mistake lies in wanting to accomplish this work all at once in its entirety, in its integrality, in depth and above all on the surface, forgetting

that the very conception of the work is imperfect as they are imperfect and that to be wise, they should add to the knowledge of what they *wish* to do the more immediate and practical knowledge of what they are *capable* of doing at the present moment.

By taking both these factors into account, they can employ themselves with a minimum waste of time and energy.

But few people act with so much insight and wisdom. And it very often happens that one who is seeking his way falls into one of these two possible errors:

Either he takes his desires for realities, that is, he overestimates his present strength and capacity and imagines that he is capable of immediately assuming a place and a role which he can honourably fulfil only after many years of methodical and persevering effort.

Or he underestimates his latent powers and deliberately confines himself, in spite of his deeper aspirations, to a task which is far beneath his abilities and which will gradually extinguish within him the light that could have shone for others.

It seems difficult at first to steer clear of these pitfalls and find the balanced way, the middle way." (CWM 2: 52–53)

5.

"But we have a sure pointer to guide us.

Above all, whatever we undertake should not be done for the purpose of self-assertion. If we are attached to fame and glory, to the esteem of our peers, we are soon led to make concessions to them; and if we seek any opportunity to admire ourselves, it becomes easy to make ourselves out to be what we are not, and nothing more obscures the ideal within us.

We should never tell ourselves, openly or indirectly, 'I want to be great, what vocation can I find for myself in order to become great?'

On the contrary, we should tell ourselves, 'There must certainly be something I can do better than anyone else, since each one of us is a special mode of manifestation of the divine power which, in its essence, is one in all. However humble and modest it may be, this is precisely the thing to which I should devote myself, and in order to find it, I shall observe and analyse my tastes, tendencies and preferences, and I shall do it without pride or excessive humility, whatever others may think I shall do it just as I breathe, just as the flower smells sweet, quite simply, quite naturally, because I cannot do otherwise.'

As soon as we have abolished within us, even for a moment, all egoistic desires, all personal and selfish aims, we can surrender to this inner spontaneity, this deep inspiration which will enable us to commune with the living and progressive forces of the universe.

The conception of our work will inevitably grow more perfect as we grow more perfect ourselves; and to realise this growing perfection, no effort to exceed ourselves should be neglected, but the work we perform must become always more and more joyful and spontaneous, like water welling from a pure spring." (CWM 2: 53–54)

6.

"Certainly, the most important occupation is to develop and perfect oneself, but that can be done very well, and even better, while working. It is for you to know what work it is that most interests you, the one that opens for you a path towards perfection. It may be something apparently very modest; it is not the apparent importance of a work which gives it its real value for the yoga." (CWM 16: 352)

7.

"I was asked [*in the preceding letter*] whether everything done that had the Mother's permission was not a *kartavyaṁ karma*. People ask for permission to a host of things dictated by various reasons—it does not follow that the Mother's permission to all these things are her dictates. What work is given by the Mother is her work—also whatever work is done with sincerity as an offering to the Mother is her work also—that goes without saying. But Karma covers all kinds of actions and not work only." (CWSA 32: 417)

8.

"*Sweet Mother, when someone wants to do some work, is it better that you choose the work for him or that he chooses it himself?*

This depends on the point of view one takes.

If it is from the point of view of yoga and of the person who wants to do the work, it is preferable to let him choose, because he can be, for example, under the illusion that he is capable of doing something and he is not; or he has an ambition, he wants to do something to satisfy his self-love, his vanity. And so, if he is allowed to do so, as the work that's done here is under the influence of the Truth-Consciousness, his incapacity for the work will appear immediately, and he will be able to make progress; whereas if I see that a particular person is capable of doing a particular work—another work, you understand—and I tell him, 'No, that work does not suit you, it is better that you do this one,' he will never be convinced (he or she, it doesn't matter), he will always think that it's an arbitrary decision, that it's simply because one preferred his doing this thing or that. So from his personal point of view it is better to let him do what he asks for, so that he may make the progress he ought to make. If it happens that he is very conscious of the work he can do and asks precisely for the work he ought to do, then it is good, there's no more discussion, it is very good." (CWM 7: 280–281)

9.

"Each must find the activity favourable to his progress." (CWM 14: 325)

LXII—If You Have Concentration and Will, You Will Be a Genius

1.

"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)

LXIII—The Secret of Works—The Master, the Worker and the Instrument

1.

"In Thy works there are always these three, the Master, the Worker and the Instrument. To define them in oneself rightly and rightly to possess them is the secret of works and of the delight of works.

Learn thou first to be the instrument of God and to accept thy Master. The instrument is this outward thing thou callest thyself; it is a mould of mind, a driving-force of power, a machinery of form, a thing full of springs and cogs and clamps and devices. Call not this the Worker or the Master; it can never be the Worker or the Master. Accept thyself humbly, yet proudly, devotedly, submissively and joyfully as a divine instrument.

There is no greater pride and glory than to be a perfect instrument of the Master.

Learn thou first absolutely to obey. The sword does not choose where it shall strike, the arrow does not ask whither it shall be driven, the springs of the machine do not insist on the product that shall be turned out from its labour. These things are settled by the intention and working of Nature and the more the conscious instrument learns to feel and obey the pure and essential law of its nature, the sooner shall the work turned out become perfect and flawless. Self-choice by the nervous motive

power, revolt of the physical and mental tool can only mar the working.

Let thyself drive in the breath of God and be as a leaf in the tempest; put thyself in His hand and be as the sword that strikes and the arrow that leaps to its target. Let thy mind be as the spring of the machine, let thy force be as the shooting of a piston, let thy work be as the grinding and shaping descent of the steel on its object. Let thy speech be the clang of the hammer on the anvil and the moan of the engine in its labour and the cry of the trumpet that proclaims the force of God to the regions. In whatsoever way do as an instrument the work that is natural to thee and appointed.

The sword has a joy in the battle-play, the arrow has a mirth in its hiss and its leaping, the earth has a rapture in its dizzy whirl through space, the sun has the royal ecstasy of its blazing splendours and its eternal motion. O thou self-conscious instrument, take thou too the delight of thy own appointed workings.

The sword did not ask to be made, nor does it resist its user, nor lament when it is broken. There is a joy of being made and a joy of being used and a joy of being put aside and a joy too of being broken. That equal joy discover.

Because thou hast mistaken the instrument for the worker and the master and because thou seekest to choose by the ignorance of thy desire thy own state and thy own

profit and thy own utility, therefore thou hast suffering and anguish and hast many times to be thrust into the red hell of the furnace and hast many times to be reborn and reshaped and retempered until thou shalt have learned thy human lesson.

And all these things are because they are in thy unfinished nature. For Nature is the worker and what is it that she works at? She shapes out of her crude mind and life and matter a fully conscious being." (CWSA 13: 164)

2.

"My dear child,

I am very happy to know that you want to be my instrument. To be able to be my instrument, you must be regular, energetic, courageous, enduring and always good-tempered. I have no doubt that you can acquire these qualities.

With you always." (CWM 16: 128–129)

3.

"Know thyself next as the Worker. Understand thy nature to be the worker and thy own nature and All-Nature to be thyself.

This nature-self is not proper to thee nor limited. Thy nature has made the sun and the systems, the earth and her creatures, thyself and thine and all thou art and perceivest. It is thy friend and thine enemy, thy mother

and thy devourer, thy lover and thy torturer, the sister of thy soul and an alien and a stranger, thy joy and thy sorrow, thy sin and thy virtue, thy strength and thy weakness, thy knowledge and thy ignorance. And yet it is none of these things, but something of which they are attempts and imperfect images. For beyond all these it is an original self-knowledge and an infinite force and innumerable quality.

But in thee there is a special movement, a proper nature and an individual energy. Follow that like a widening river till it leads thee to its infinite source and origin.

Know therefore thy body to be a knot in Matter and thy mind to be a whirl in universal Mind and thy life to be an eddy of Life that is for ever. Know thy force to be every other being's force and thy knowledge to be a glimmer from the light that belongs to no man and thy works to be made for thee and be delivered from the error of thy personality.

When that is done, thou shalt take thy free delight in the truth of thy individual being and in thy strength and in thy glory and in thy beauty and in thy knowledge; and in the denial of these things thou shalt take delight also. For all this is the dramatic mask of the Person and the self-image of the self-Sculptor.

Why shouldst thou limit thyself? Feel thyself also in the sword that strikes thee and the arms that embrace, in the blazing of the sun and the dance of the earth, in the

flight of the eagle and the song of the nightingale, in all that is past and all that is now and all that is pressing forward to become. For thou art infinite and all this joy is possible to thee.

The Worker has the joy of her works and the joy of her Lover for whom she works. She knows herself to be his consciousness and his force, his knowledge and his reserving of knowledge, his unity and his self-division, his infinity and the finite of his being. Know thyself also to be these things; take thou also the delight of thy Lover.

There are those who know themselves as a workshop or an instrument or the thing worked, but they mistake the Worker for the Master; this too is an error. Those who fall into it can hardly arrive at her high, pure and perfect workings.

The instrument is finite in a personal image, the worker is universal with a personal trend, but neither of these is the Master; for neither is the true Person." (CWSA 13: 164–165)

4.

"Know last the Master to be thyself; but to this self put no form and seek for it no definition of quality. Be one with That in thy being, commune with That in thy consciousness, obey That in thy force, be subject to That and clasped by it in thy delight, fulfil That in thy life and body and mentality. Then before an opening eye within

thee there shall emerge that true and only Person, thyself and not thyself, all others and more than all others, the Director and Enjoyer of thy works, the Master of the worker and the instrument, the Reveller and Trampler in the dance of the universe and yet hushed and alone with thee in thy soul's silent and inner chamber.

The joy of the Master possessed, there is nothing else for thee to conquer. For He shall give thee Himself and all things and all creatures' gettings and havings and doings and enjoyings for thy own proper portion, and He shall give thee that also which cannot be portioned.

Thou shalt contain in thy being thyself and all others and be that which is neither thyself nor all others. Of works this is the consummation and the summit." (CWSA 13: 166)

LXIV—Negligence in Work Is the Worst Form of Bad Will

1.

"I was intending to write to you that this neglected work must be carried out immediately.

I accept your explanation that it is not bad will but negligence. But I must tell you that for me negligence is the worst form of bad will, for it is the refusal to surrender to the divine inspiration and consciousness which demand a constant vigilance.

I hope that this new year will bring you all the breadth of mind and generosity of heart which will make such unfortunate incidents impossible." (CWM 14: 307)

2.

"*I hear you do not like the gate-keepers to do any writing, reading etc. when on duty. Is it true? Up till now I have been writing during that time.*

It was because people were neglecting their duty in the absorption of reading and writing, allowing undesirable people to enter etc. If that does not happen, one can read or write—only when one is on duty, the duty comes first." (CWSA 35: 755)

LXV—Organising Your Work

1.

"But don't you think that all these things are the result of a lack of organisation in your life? One lives from moment to moment, as things come, anyhow. Or else one makes some effort of mental organisation which does not at all correspond to the truth and therefore is thwarted every minute. ...

Usually, instead of choosing one's work very carefully and taking exactly what one can do and doing it as well as one can, very often one takes too much. And in this too much there are many things which are at least partially useless, which could be considerably reduced, without harming the result (note that I am not making a general rule of it, it is only an experience I have); and when one is very attentive to the inner indication and refuses to be tossed by the waves that come from outside—these waves are of all kinds of movements arising from the wills of others or from a kind of routine of circumstances or from oppositions coming from forces which are not very favourable—so, instead of being pushed like that and moved by these things, if one receives a very clear, very precise inner indication and follows it without equivocating, you see, without any hesitation, a little strictly—indeed, if it doesn't please others, so much the worse for them—well, it happens that one becomes in a way the master of

circumstances, that they are organised favourably, and that one does much more work in much less time.

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: 125–126)

2.

"Organise your life, your work, your consciousness.

Organisation consists in putting each thing in its true place." (CWM 17: 154)

3.

"*When people set a date by which a work must be completed, the usual result is that there is a huge haste, followed by a period in which people don't know what to do. Is it really necessary to fix dates? I wonder sometimes if doing so does not create a sort of occult resistance.*

It is necessary to fix dates for the organisation of the work, but there must be a certain plasticity so that if necessary the time may be extended. As to particular cases it is a matter of judgment how much time is to be given. It is the system of the schedule, but whether the work can be done 'according to schedule', as they say, has to be seen in practice. The occult resistance is a fact but it applies more to psychological than to physical things." (CWSA 35: 757)

LXVI—Mistakes in Work

1.

"Mistakes come from people bringing their ego, their personal feelings (likes and dislikes), their sense of prestige or their convenience, pride, sense of possession, etc. into the work. The right way is to feel that the work is the Mother's—not only yours, but the work of others—and to carry it out in such a spirit that there shall be general harmony. Harmony cannot be brought about by external organisation only, though a more and more perfect external organisation is necessary; inner harmony there must be or else there will always be clash and disorder." (CWSA 32: 446)

2.

"Do not allow yourself to be so much disturbed by so small a matter. It is not at all necessary to apologise to X. When one has a wrong movement, all one has to do is to recognise it and reject and be more careful to avoid it in the future. As you have told the Mother, let the thing disappear from your mind and recover your movement." (CWSA 32: 446)

3.

"*Something in my consciousness stops me before going the wrong way or doing a bad action, but sometimes it does*

not. I want there not to be a single wrong action which Mother does not like.

If you want strongly and if you always try to be careful, then that too will come." (CWSA 32: 446)

4.

"What Mother said was that she was perfectly aware of errors done in the work, but as she had to work out a certain Force in these things looking at them from an inner viewpoint, not with the external intellect, she found it often necessary to pass over imperfections and errors. This does not at all mean that the sadhak worker has not to care whether there are errors in his own work where he is responsible. If other sadhaks commit errors that is their responsibility, one can observe and avoid similar mistakes in oneself, but one sadhak cannot correct the errors of others unless that comes within his responsibility— each has to correct himself and his own defects and mistakes." (CWSA 32: 447)

LXVII—Difficulties in Work

1. Fatigue

1.a.
"With the right consciousness always there, there would be no fatigue." (CWSA 29: 273)

1.b.
"It [*the cause of fatigue*] is probably some desire or vital preference—likes and dislikes in the vital. All work given you must be felt as the Mother's and done with joy, opening yourself for the Mother's force to work through you." (CWSA 29: 273)

1.c.
"If there is the full surrender in the work and you feel it is the Mother's and that the Mother's force is working in you, then fatigue does not come." (CWSA 29: 273)

1.d.
"*This morning I felt tired after five minutes' work. It was only polishing furniture!*

All manual work is tiring the first few times one does it. But gradually the body gets used to it and becomes strong.

However, when you feel really tired, you must stop and rest." (CWM 14: 315)

1.e.
"The best way to work without getting tired is to offer the work you do (whatever work it is) to the Divine and to find in the Divine the support you need — for the Divine's Force is inexhaustible and He answers always to whatever offer is made to Him sincerely.

Then, when you will feel that it is the Divine's Force that has done the work in you and through you, in your sincerity you will know that the merit is His and not yours — so there is no more reason to be proud." (CWM 14: 315)

2. Resistance in some part of nature

2.a.
"The pain, burning, restlessness, weeping and inability to work which you feel, come when there is some difficulty or resistance in some part of the nature. When it comes call on the Mother and reject these things; turn to her for the peace and quietude to return to your mind and settle in the heart, so that there shall be no place for these other things." (CWSA 29: 273)

2.b.
"The resistance with which we meet in the accomplishment of our work is proportionate to its importance." (CWM 14: 316)

3. Avoid overstrain

3.a.
"Yes, it is a mistake to overstrain as there is a reaction afterwards. If there is energy, all must not be spent, some must be stored up so as to increase the permanent strength of the system." (CWSA 29: 274)

3.b.
"Overstraining brings inertia up. Everybody has inertia in his nature: the question is of its greater or lesser operation." (CWSA 29: 274)

3.c.
"When you feel tired, don't overstrain yourself but rest—doing only your ordinary work; restlessly doing something or other all the time is not the way to cure it. To be quiet without and within is what is needed when there is this sense of fatigue. There is always a strength near you which you can call in and it will remove these things, but you must learn to be quiet in order to receive it." (CWSA 29: 274)

4. Excessive sensitiveness or quickness of temper

4.a.
"Wherever there is excessive sensitiveness or quickness of temper, occasions of clash and quarrel will arise, no matter with whom one works—and especially where there is the pressure of the sadhana, which requires that all such weaknesses should be overcome, occasions are likely to arise which will bring them to the surface. The only way is not to indulge them or act under their influence, but to face them and overcome." (CWSA 29: 278)

5. When there is a lack of sympathy and support in one's work, you must not allow yourself to be in the least disturbed by these things

5.a.
"From the point of view of sadhana—you must not allow yourself to be in the least disturbed by these things [*lack of sympathy and support in one's work*]. What you have to do, what is right to be done, should be done in perfect calmness with the support of the Divine Force. All that is necessary for a successful result, can be done—including the securing of the support of those who are able to help you. But if this outer support is not forthcoming, you have not to be disturbed but to proceed calmly on your way. If

there is any difficulty or unsuccess anywhere not due to your own fault, you have not to be troubled. Strength, unmoved calm, quiet, straight and right dealing with all things you have to deal with must be the rule of your action." (CWSA 29: 283)

6. When you are offended

6.a.
"Keep unmoved, unoffended, do your work without being discouraged, call on the Force to act for you. It is a field of trial for you—the inward result is more important than the outward." (CWSA 29: 283)

7. So long as one insists on success, one is doing the work partly at least for the ego
8. Difficulties and outward failures come to warn one that it is so and to bring complete equality

"For the sadhak outward struggles, troubles, calamities are only a means of surmounting ego and rajasic desire and attaining to complete surrender. So long as one insists on success, one is doing the work partly at least for the ego; difficulties and outward failures come to warn one that it is so and to bring complete equality. This does not mean that the power of victory is not to be acquired; but it is not success in the immediate work that is all-important; it is

the power to receive and transmit a greater and greater correct vision and inner Force that has to be developed and this must be done quite coolly and patiently without being elated or disturbed by immediate victory or failure." (CWSA 29: 241)

9. Laying the first stress on your own ideas, plans, and words about the work is bound to fail if they are not instruments of the true Force

"If I can judge from your letters, you take its support too much for granted and lay the first stress on your own ideas and plans and words about the work; but these whether good or bad, right or mistaken, are bound to fail if they are not instruments of the true Force. 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.

Proceed with your work, never forgetting the condition of success. Do not lose yourself in the work or in your ideas or plans or forget to keep yourself in constant touch with the true source. Do not allow anybody's mind or vital influence or the influence of the surrounding atmosphere or the ordinary human mentality to come

between you and the power and presence of the Mother." (CWSA 29: 243)

10. In the unchanged condition, the lower parts get interested and are enthusiastic about work when the ego mixes with the interest

"As a rule, I mean in their unchanged condition, the lower parts get interested and enthusiastic [*about work*] when the ego mixes with the interest. But the pure enthusiasm can come into them as they get more and more converted and purified and they then become very indispensable forces for the realisation." (CWSA 29: 250–251)

11. Too much work

11.a.
"If too much work is done, the quality of the work often deteriorates in spite of the zest of the workers." (CWSA 29: 275)

11.b.
"To work all the time is excessive, unless there is need—but the impulse to work in itself is good." (CWSA 29: 275)
11.c.
"You have probably taken too much work on yourself by adding to the rest accounts, etc. That was not necessary.

There is no reason why you should not do a normal amount and have time and energy for meditation as well. If you wish, however, to change, Mother may consider it, though she does not just now see how to arrange." (CWSA 32: 252)

12. Always worrying about work

12.a.

"The difficulty you find results very much from your always worrying with your mind about things, thinking 'This is wrong, that is wrong in me or my work' and, as a result, 'I am incompetent, I am bad, nothing can be done with me.' Your embroidery work, your lampshades etc. have always been very good, and yet you are always thinking 'This is bad work, that is wrong' and by doing so, confuse yourself and get into a muddle. Naturally, you make a mistake now and then, but more when you worry like that than when you do things simply and confidently.

It is better whether with work or with sadhana to go on quietly, allowing the Force to act and doing your best to let it work rightly, but without this self-tormenting and constant restless questioning at every point. Whatever defects there are would go much sooner, if you did not harp on them too much; for by dwelling on them so much you lose confidence in yourself and in your power of openness to the Force—which is there all the same—and

put unnecessary difficulties in the way of its working." (CWSA 29: 284–285)

12.b.

"There is nothing really wrong with your work; it is very well done. It is only your imagination that makes you always think it is defective here and defective there. There may be slight mistakes sometimes, but that is the case with everybody. You have only to work quietly, getting the best inspiration you can and, if there is any difficulty, to be quiet and the right thing will come. To be true to the inner feeling, remaining turned towards us for help is absolutely the right way; to trouble and doubt and fret is quite the wrong way." (CWSA 29: 285)

12.c.

"Do not worry about mistakes in work. Often you imagine that things are badly done by you when really you have done them very well; but even if there are mistakes, it is nothing to be sad about. Let the consciousness grow—only in the divine consciousness is there an entire perfection. The more you surrender to the Divine, the more will there be the possibility of perfection in you." (CWSA 29: 285)

12.d.

"Do not attach too much importance to such mistakes or get upset about them. It is the nature of the mind to make

such mistakes. It is only a higher consciousness that can set them right—the mind can be sure only after a very long training in each particular action and even then it has only to be off-guard for something untoward to occur. Do as well as you can, and for the rest let the higher consciousness grow till it can enlighten all the movements of the physical mind." (CWSA29: 285)

12.e.

"Your difficulty is that you worry yourself and think you have made mistakes when you have made none. If you want to get the right guidance, you must have more confidence and not always think that what comes to you is wrong and your work is bad and ugly. You generally get things right. If you do make a mistake here and there, it does not matter; everybody makes some mistakes; but by making them one can learn better.

Another thing is that, as I have told you, a thing can be done in several ways, all of which are good—but your mind seems to go on the feeling that one thing is good or true and all the rest is bad or false and, as it were, is seeking for the one only good way and then in everything it does it feels dissatisfied. When you have found a way of doing the work, it is better to do it and not always be worrying yourself for something better." (CWSA 29: 261–262)

13. The difficulty in work arises from excess of sensitiveness in the vital nature

14. As a matter of fact, the difficulty often arises from circumstances, e.g. the Building Service with its much reduced staff and a rush of work using up all its men

15. Or a difficulty may arise from people acting according to their view of a matter which does not accord with yours

16. Or a difficulty may come from the person following his own ideas and view of what is convenient and effective, and thus coming up against yours

17. There need be no personal feeling in all that, and it is best not to look for any or to see it from that point of view

18. What is needed is always to take a calm view of the thing and a clear vision

19. Not only from one's own standpoint, which may be eventually right and yet need modification in detail, but also with a vision that sees the standpoint of others

20. This broad seeing, quiet and impersonal, is needed in the full Yogic consciousness

21. Having it, one can insist on what has to be insisted on with firmness but at the same time with consideration and understanding of the other that removes the chance of any clash of personal feeling

22. Naturally, if the other is unreasonable, he may still resent, but then it will be entirely his own fault and it will fall back on him only

23. Loyalty, fidelity, capacity, strength of will, and other qualities in the work you have in plenty

24. Now a full calm and equality, not only in the inner being where it can exist already, but in the outer nervous parts is a thing you have to get completely

"The difficulty rises from a certain excess of sensitiveness in the vital nature which feels strongly any want of harmony or opposition in the work or any untoward happening and, when that comes, one is apt to feel it as if a personal opposition and on the other side also a similar feeling arises and so the difficulty becomes prolonged and leads to conflict. As a matter of fact the difficulty often arises from circumstances, e.g. the B.S. [*Building Service*] with its much reduced staff and a rush of work using up all its men may find it more difficult to accommodate you than before. Or it may arise from people acting according to

their view of a matter which does not accord with yours. Or again it may come from the person following his own ideas, view of what is convenient and effective and thus coming up against yours. There need be no personal feeling in all that and it is best not to look for any and not to see it from that point of view. What is needed is always to take a calm view of the thing and a clear vision—not only from one's own standpoint which may be eventually right and yet need modification in detail, but with a vision that sees also the standpoint of others. This broad seeing, quiet and impersonal, is needed in the full Yogic consciousness. Having it one can insist on what has to be insisted on with firmness but at the same time with a consideration and understanding of the other that removes the chance of any clash of personal feeling. Naturally if the other is unreasonable, he may still resent, but then it will be his own fault entirely and it will fall back on him only. It is here that we see the necessity of some change. Loyalty, fidelity, capacity, strength of will and other qualities in the work you have in plenty—a full calm and equality not only in the inner being where it can exist already, but in the outer nervous parts is a thing you have to get completely." (CWSA 29: 278–279)

25. If in the work you meet with some difficulties, look sincerely into yourself and there you will discover their origin

"If in the work you meet with some difficulties, look sincerely into yourself and there you will discover their origin." (CWM 14: 309)

26. The difficulties in work come not from circumstances or petty outer occurrences; they come from something which is wrong in the inner attitude, especially in the vital attitude: egoism, ambition, fixity of mental conceptions regarding work, vanity

27. And it is always good, in order to correct the disharmony, to look for the cause in oneself rather than in others

"The difficulties in work come not from circumstances or petty outer occurrences, they come from something which is wrong in the inner attitude, especially in the vital attitude: egoism, ambition, fixity of mental conceptions regarding work, vanity, etc. And it is always good, in order to correct the disharmony, to look for the cause in oneself rather than in others." (CWM 14: 310)

28. If anyone were capable of seeing the welfare of the work quite independently of his preferences and without turning everything into a personal question, then most of the difficulties would be solved

"If anyone were capable of seeing the welfare of the work quite independent of his preferences and without turning everything into a personal question, then most of the difficulties would be solved." (CWM 14: 313)

29. To learn the job

"I do not see why you should feel oppressed. It is not an easy job to run an establishment like X Garden and many bitter experiences may be necessary before you learn the job. I only ask that you should keep *a good will to learn and to improve your capacities*. For the rest, that is to say the results, we must be patient.

With my love and blessings." (CWM 14: 316)

30. Dissatisfaction in work

Doing Work for the Mother

"Is there any use in the Mother's spending money and taking trouble for useless undivine me? I am giving her trouble by my very existence and I am no good at all.

You have allowed yourself to accept the old wrong suggestions—for a mere trifle—and so got into the wrong condition once more. You were doing the work for the Mother I suppose, not for yourself—to satisfy her, not to satisfy yourself? Then if the Mother was satisfied, why should you be dissatisfied? You should also have understood by this time that the Mother's ideas of what is good or not, what will do or not do, are more correct than the ideas of your mind about it,—for your mind is always worrying and tormenting itself for nothing.

Drive all this away. You know by experience that it is a false road and leads to no progress but only to confusion and trouble. Open yourself again to the Force and Peace and Light—it is that alone that can make you understand and change you." (CWSA 32: 413)

31. Disturbed by the vital ego

31.a.

"*The Mother has taken away my small terrace work. She has not reconsidered my case and given me my work back. This disturbed me very much.*

You are disturbed because of your vital ego. It is evident that your faith and attitude cannot be perfect, if because Mother makes other arrangements for her work, you at once regard her as unjust, false and tricky. Every sadhak

ought to realise that the work given him is not his property—it is not his work but hers; she must be perfectly free to make an arrangement and to change it whenever she thinks right to do so. To challenge her action and demand an explanation from her or claim the work as personal property is an entirely mistaken and egoistic attitude." (CWSA 32: 426)

31.b.

"The fact that people do work for the Mother does not mean that she must do all that they ask for with regard to that work and that if she does not do so it means lack of support or disapproval. That is the attitude of most workers in the Asram including *X,* that is an entirely mistaken attitude.

If sadhaks get upset when the Mother does not do what they ask from her or begin to get suggestions of this kind, that means that they are bringing their vital ego into the work,—they are thinking, '*My* work is not supported, the Mother is upholding someone else and not *me*' and other 'I's and 'my's of the same kind. It is only they who are feeling the work to be theirs, it is not the Mother who is so regarding it." (CWSA 32: 444)

32. Not be troubled by the defects of others in their work

32.a.

"One can discourage them by keeping certain ideas in mind, such as that the things which vex you belong to the nature and can go only with the change of the nature, that one has to do the work well oneself but not be troubled by the defects of others in their work, that a quiet inner will for their doing right is more effective than getting vexed and disturbed by their lapses. But fundamentally it is by the widened consciousness in your mind and vital and physical that you will be quite freed from these small reactions. You have only to continue with the Mother's Force working in you and these things will smooth themselves out hereafter." (CWSA 31: 36)

32.b.

"It is true that mixing with others too closely tends to lower the condition, if they are not themselves in the right attitude and live very much in the vital. In all contacts what you have to do is to remain within, keep a detached attitude and not allow yourself to be troubled by the difficulties that arise in work or the movements of people, but keep yourself the true movement. Do not be caught by the desire to 'help' others—do and speak yourself the right thing from the inner poise and leave the help to come to them from the Divine. Nobody can really help—only the Divine Grace." (CWSA 31: 325)

33. To pass through the difficult moments, keep your interest in the work

33.a.

"*My sweet mother,*

I feel completely suffocated. The struggle has become fiercer. How many days must I go on like this?

My dear child,

Do not lose heart and do not be impatient; these things take a long time to disappear. You know, don't you, that our force, our help and our blessings are always with you?

Keep your interest in the work—this too will help you to pass through the difficult moments.

Love from your mother." (CWM 16: 137)

LXVIII—Order, Harmony and Organisation in Work

1.

"Order, harmony and organisation in physical things is a necessary part of efficiency and perfection and make the instrument more fit for whatever work is given to it." (CWSA 29: 276)

2.

"There can be no physical life without an order and rhythm. When this order is changed it must be in obedience to an inner growth and not for the sake of external novelty. It is only a certain part of the surface lower vital nature which seeks always external change and novelty for its own sake.

It is by a constant inner growth that one can find a constant newness and unfailing interest in life. There is no other satisfying way." (CWSA 29: 276)

3.

"In the most physical things you have to fix a programme in order to deal with them, otherwise all becomes a sea of confusion and haphazard. Fixed rules have also to be made for the management of material things so long as people are not sufficiently developed to deal with them in the right way without rules. But in matters of the inner development and the sadhana it is impossible to map out a plan fixed in every detail and say, 'Every time you shall stop here, there,

in this way, on that line and no other.' Things would become so tied up and rigid that nothing could be done; there could be no true and effective movement." (CWSA 29: 276)

4.

"When all is in agreement with one Truth or an expression of it, that is harmony." (CWSA 29: 278)

5.

"For harmony and better work, it is not by changing men that things can get better, but by changing one's own consciousness and character." (CWM 14: 309)

6.

"As for the work, I have already told you that it is not by your going away that there will be harmony and peace. Wherever there are human beings working together, differences and disagreements and incompatibilities of temper will always be there. It is only if the human nature changes that it will be otherwise, but that cannot be done at once. One has to go on quietly and patiently doing the work for the Mother's sake until the change can be made in yourself and others." (CWSA 29: 284)

7.

"To recognise the presence of a 'disharmonious atmosphere' is useful only so far as it wakes in each one

the will to change it into a harmonious atmosphere and to do that the first important step is for each one to get out of his own limited point of view in order to understand the point of view of others. It is more important for each one to find the mistake in *himself* than to insist on the mistake of others.

I add that all those to whom I have given responsibility in the work are expected to be faithful to this responsibility and, without allowing of any 'hurt feeling' to creep in, do their best to carry on successfully their duty.

My blessings are with all those who are sincere and have goodwill." (CWM 14: 310)

8.

"Each man has his defects—you and all others. So you should not allow that to destroy the harmony that should reign among workers. Remember that patience and equanimity and good feeling for all are the first needs of the sadhak." (CWSA 35: 752)

9.

"There must be order and harmony in work. Even what is apparently the most insignificant thing must be done with perfect perfection, with a sense of cleanliness, beauty, harmony and order." (CWM 14: 305)

10.

"Psychic work: a work governed by harmony." (CWM 14: 311)

11.

You have written, 'Harmony cannot be brought about by external organisation only . . . ; inner harmony there must be or else there will always be clash and disorder.' What is that inner harmony?

Union in the Mother." (CWSA 32: 433)

12.

"*I am confident that in the long run every thing will be clear and there will be Mother's victory.*

The Mother's victory is, essentially, the victory of each sadhak over himself. It can only be then that any external form of work can come to harmonious perfection." (CWSA 32: 331)

13.

"Organised teamwork: each one at his place and all together." (CWM 14: 311)

14.

"Organisation: indispensable for all good work." (CWM 14: 305)

15.

"An organisation is needed for the work to be done—but the organisation itself must be flexible and progressive." (CWM 13: 199)

16.

"I may mention that he told *Y* that there were two things he specially admired in the Asram, first the fact that everybody here rich or poor or of whatever caste was on the same level, and secondly the discipline of the Asram. He said, according to *Y*, that the absence of discipline was the great bane in India, neither individuals nor groups had any discipline. Then why did he weep merely because he was not allowed to put his handbag in a place not intended for it? I do not agree myself with him in the idea that there is perfect discipline in the Asram; on the contrary, there is a great lack of it, much indiscipline, quarrelling and self-assertion. What there is, is organisation and order which the Mother has been able to establish and maintain in spite of all that. That organisation and order is necessary for all collective work; it has been an object of admiration and surprise for all from outside who have observed the Asram; it is the reason why the Asram has been able to survive and outlive the malignant attacks of the Catholic priests and of many people in Pondicherry who would otherwise have got it dissolved long ago. The Mother knew very well what she was doing and what was necessary for the work she had to do." (CWSA 32: 577)

LXIX—Collaboration in Work

1.

"Collaboration and reciprocal goodwill are indispensable for good work." (CWM 14: 312)

2.

"To concentrate on a close collaboration in the work would be obviously a more useful attitude than to concentrate on mutual grievances.

The most important point is that the work should be quickly done and well done." (CWM 14: 312)

3.

"No great work can be done without co-ordination and discipline.

A true and organised collaboration is the condition of success." (CWM 14: 313)

4.

"It is only in harmonious collaboration that effective work can be done.

The important thing is to find the point on which you can all agree—and after this is firmly established, each one must be ready to yield his personal will in order to keep intact this point of harmony." (CWM 14: 313)

5.

"When we have to work collectively, it is always better to insist, in our thoughts, feelings and actions, on the points of agreement rather than on the points of divergence.

We must give importance to the things that unite and ignore, as much as possible, those that separate.

Even when physically the lines of work differ, the union can remain intact and constant if we keep always in mind the essential points and principles which unite, and the Divine Goal, the Realisation which must be the one unchanging object of our aspiration and works." (CWM 14: 313)

LXX—Rules, Discipline, Regularity, Thoroughness in Work

1.

"Rules are indispensable for the orderly management of work; for without order and arrangement nothing can be properly done, all becomes clash, confusion and disorder." (CWSA 29: 277)

2.

"A rule that can be varied by everyone at his pleasure is no rule. In all countries in which organised work is successfully done, (India is not one of them), rules exist and nobody thinks of breaking them, for it is realised that work (or life either) without discipline would soon become a confusion and an anarchic failure. In the great days of India everything was put under rule, even art and poetry, even Yoga. Here in fact rules are much less rigid than in any European organisation. Personal discretion can even in a frame of rules have plenty of play—but discretion must be discreetly used, otherwise it becomes something arbitrary or chaotic." (CWSA 29: 277)

3.

"Rules are made for the proper harmony and convenience of the work. If you disregard them you promote disorder, inefficiency and looseness of work and at the same time

you yourself become or remain loose, negligent, undisciplined and imperfect." (CWSA 35: 754)

4.

"In work there must be a rule and discipline and as much punctuality as possible in regard to time." (CWSA 29: 277)

5.

"To be able to be regular is a great force, one becomes master of one's time and one's movements." (CWSA 29: 277)

6.

"*O Mother, I agree that my life and my work are not organised. Can't You help me to organise them?*
The first step is to get into the habit of *regularity* in your daily discipline." (CWM 17: 154)

7.

"That is quite necessary for work; efficiency and discipline are indispensable. They can however only partly be maintained by outward means—it really depends, in ordinary life, on the personality of the superior, his influence on the subordinates, his firmness, tact, kindness in dealing with them. But the sadhak depends on a deeper force, that of his inner consciousness and the Force working through him." (CWSA 29: 277)

8.

"[*Discipline:*]To act according to a standard of Truth or a rule or law of action (dharma) or in obedience to a superior authority or to the highest principles discovered by the reason and intelligent will and not according to one's own fancy, vital impulses and desires. In Yoga obedience to the Guru or to the Divine and the law of the Truth as declared by the Guru is the foundation of discipline." (CWSA 29: 278)

9.

"Without discipline, no good work can be done.

Each one to his place, doing conscientiously the work assigned to him, and all will be well." (CWM 14: 311)

10.

"As for outward things, what has been lacking in you has been discipline, order, self-consecration in your work. You have acted according to your impulse and fancy and been unable to do any work steadily and with devotion in the work. The Mother gave you library work to do and it has not been scrupulously done. She asks you for the sake of your own self-discipline to do that little carefully and scrupulously in the future. For the rest you can go on with your music and your sadhana; but let all be done in a deeper spirit and as an offering to the Divine." (CWSA 35: 751–752)

11.

"*My little mother,*

I shall be so happy when all the clouds and shadows are dissolved. I want a new life.

My dear child,

You are quite right in wanting a new life, and you may be sure that I shall do my best to help you in that. I am quite sure that perseverance in study and the acceptance of a discipline of work and order in life will be a powerful help to you in renewing yourself.

All my love is with you to help you and guide you." (CWM 16: 145)

12.

"It is impossible for the Mother to arrange the work according to personal considerations as then all work would become impossible." (CWSA 32: 424)

13.

"What most want is that things should be done according to their desire without check or reference. The talk of perfection is humbug. Perfection does not consist in everybody being a law to himself. Perfection comes by renunciation of desires and surrender to a higher Will." (CWSA 29: 278)

14.

"Thoroughness means to do whatever you do completely, thoroughly, so that it may be entire and perfect, not carelessly or partially done. It refers to internal things as well as to external." (CWSA 29: 278)

15.

"For the work steadiness and regularity are as necessary as skill. Whatever you do, do it always carefully." (CWM 14: 305)

16.

"The human vital everywhere, in the Asram also, is full of unruly and violent forces—anger, pride, jealousy, desire to dominate, selfishness, insistence on one's own will, ideas, preferences, indiscipline—and it is these things that are the cause of the disorder and difficulty in the D.R. [*DiningRoom*] and elsewhere also in the Asram work. The rule established in order to control or combat these tendencies is that the Mother's will and the rule and discipline established by her shall be followed and not each worker be led by his own ego. But there are many who insist on their own ego and resent discipline. They are ready to follow the Mother's will and rule and discipline only in name and so far as it agrees with their own ideas and preferences. There is no cure for this except by an inner change. In outside life discipline is enforced because

refusal of discipline is visited by severe penalties or else results in so much discomfort of various kinds that the indisciplined man has either to submit or to go. But here in the Asram it is not possible to enforce the rule in this way. An inner obedience has to be given as the source of the outer obedience. The only remedy is the descent into the consciousness of that golden lotus which you saw in your vision. Everyone in whom it is established or even who feels its influence will become a centre of the true consciousness and true action which will change life in the Asram." (CWSA 32: 387–388)

17.

"But while the present state of things exists, with the abandonment or leaving out of discipline except such as people might choose or not choose to impose upon themselves, the result would be failure and disaster. One has only to think what would have been the result if there had been no rules and no discipline prohibiting sex-indulgence; even with them things have not been so very good. On that principle the work also would have gone to pot, there would have been nothing but strife, assertion by each worker of his own idea and self-will and constant clashes; even as it is, that has abounded and it is only the Mother's authority, the frame of work she has given and her skill in getting incompatibles to act together that has kept things going." (CWSA 32: 579)

18.

"In the political field there was on the contrary indiscipline, individualism and strife; that is one reason why India collapsed and entered into servitude. Organisation and order were attempted but failed to endure. Even in the spiritual life India has had not only the free wandering ascetic, a law to himself, but has felt impelled to create orders of Sannyasins with their rules and governing bodies and there have also been monastic institutions with a strict discipline. Since no work can be done successfully without these things—even the individual worker, the artist for instance, has to go through a severe discipline in order to become efficient—why should the Mother be held to blame if she insists on discipline in the exceedingly difficult work she has had put in her charge?

I don't see on what ground you expect order and organisation to be carried on without rules and without discipline. You seem to say that people should be allowed complete freedom with only such discipline as they choose to impose upon themselves; that might do if the only thing to be done were for each individual to get some inner realisation and life did not matter or if there were no collective life or work or none that had any importance. But this is not the case here. We have undertaken a work which includes life and action and the physical world. In what I am trying to do, the spiritual realisation is the first necessity, but it cannot be complete without an outer

realisation also in life, in man, in this world. Spiritual consciousness within but also spiritual life without. The Asram as it is now is not that ideal, for that all its members would have to live in a spiritual consciousness and not in the ordinary egoistic mind and mainly rajasic vital nature. But all the same, the Asram is a first form which our effort has taken, a field in which the preparatory work has to be done. The Mother has to maintain it and for that all this order and organisation has to be there and it cannot be done without rules and discipline." (CWSA 32: 578)

LXXI—Avoiding Harshness, Severity, Anger in Work

1.

"There are always defects on both sides which lead to this disharmony. On your side you have a tendency to too harsh a judgment of others, a readiness to see and stress the faults, defects, weak side of others and not to see enough their good side. This prevents the kindliness of outlook which should be there and gives an impression of harshness and critical severity and creates a tendency to contrariety and revolt which even when it is not there in the minds of the others, acts through their subconscient and creates all these discordant movements. To take advantage of what is good in others, keeping one's eye always on that, and to deal tactfully with their mistakes, faults and defects is the best way; it does not exclude firmness and maintenance of discipline, even severity when severity is due; but the latter should be rare and the others should not feel it as if it were a permanent attitude." (CWSA 29: 279–280)

2.

"The one thing you must try to do in your relations with your fellow-workers is to master your nerves and irritability and take care not to speak roughly, angrily or peevishly to them. It is that that is creating most of the difficulty now. If you have to be firm, you can be firm, but at the same

time quiet and even gentle. If you take care on this point, things are likely to improve soon.

If you put yourself in the Mother's hand and reject these vital movements in her strength, there is no reason why you should not pass through all ordeals and progress in the Yoga." (CWSA 29: 280)

3.

"In all such dealings with others, [*In this case the correspondent became angry when his request for help in his work was not promptly met*] you should see not only your own side of the question but the other side also. There should be no anger, vehement reproach or menace, for these things only raise anger and retort on the other side. I write this because you are trying to rise above yourself and dominate your vital and when one wants to do that, one cannot be too strict with oneself in these things. It is best even to be severe to one's own mistakes and charitable to the mistakes of others." (CWSA 29: 280)

4.

"The one that has no feelings against anyone is either the psychic being or the emotional being in the heart, the one that feels anger and is severe is a part of the external vital nature on the surface. This anger and severity is a wrong form of something that in itself has a value, a certain strength of will and force of action and control in the vital

being, without which work cannot be done. What is necessary is to get rid of the anger and to keep the force and firm will along with a developed judgment as to what is the right thing to do in any circumstances. For instance, people can be allowed to do things in their own way when that does not spoil the work, when it is only their way of doing what is necessary to be done; when their way is opposed to the discipline of the work, then they have to be controlled, but it should be done quietly and kindly, not with anger. Very often, if one has developed a silent power of putting the Mother's force on the work with one's own will as instrument, that by itself may be sufficient without having to say anything as the person changes his way of himself as if by his own initiative." (CWSA 29: 280–281)

5.

"To discourage anybody is wrong, but to give false encouragement or encouragement of anything wrong is not right. Severity has sometimes to be used (though not overused), when without it an obstinate persistence in what is wrong cannot be set right. Very often, if an inner communication has been established, a silent pressure is more effective than anything else. No absolute rule can be laid down; one has to judge and act for the best in each case." (CWSA 29: 281)

LXXII—Working with Subordinates and Superiors

1.

"It [*disciplining subordinates*] has to be done in the right spirit and the subordinates generally must be able to feel that it is so, that they are being dealt with in all uprightness and justice and by a man who has sympathy and insight and not only severity and energy. It is a question of vital tact and a strong and large vital finding always the right way to deal with the others." (CWSA 29: 281–282)

2.

"To be able to see the viewpoint of others and make allowance for their nature—neither being too harsh, authoritative or exacting, nor too weak and accommodating or indulgent, but still, even when firm, combining firmness with tact and sympathy,—is very necessary for one who has to deal with others as his inferiors in position and subject to his authority. It is also necessary when the position is reversed so that there may not be unnecessary clash or friction with official superiors." (CWSA 29: 282)

3.

"The root of the difficulty has been in the readiness of the superior officers to accept without examination the things that are said against you. A double action is needed, to

destroy the ill-will of the inferiors and to change the mind of the superiors—an invisible action, for in the visible they seem to be too much under the control of the Forces of the Ignorance." (CWSA 29: 282)

4.

"We have been very glad to get your letters with the details which prove how great and rapid a progress you have made in sadhana. All that you write shows a clear consciousness and a new orientation in the lower vital. To have seen clearly the instinct of domination and the pride of the instrument there means that that part of the being is on the right way to change—these defects must now be replaced by their true counterparts—the power to act selflessly on others for the Truth and the Right and the power to be a strong and confident but egoless instrument of the Divine. " (CWSA 29: 282)

5.

"It is not a fact that the Mother wants you to be a puppet of *X*. Of the two questions that have arisen, in one, as to the vital relation which entered into your personal friendship with him, she has fully supported your view that this vital element must not be there and from what *X* has written I believe he is himself now convinced that he made a mistake and that it must stop. If he still has any desire for it, you need not in any way yield to him, but on the

contrary must be firm about it. But there is the work. As regards the work it is not at all clear that all you think is right and all *X* does is wrong. You speak of your personality and what you seem to say is that *X* is in the work trying to impose his personality and that you want to affirm yours against it and Mother ought to have supported you, but she does not regard your personality at all but insists on your subordinating it to *X*'s. But the Mother does not at all look at it from that standpoint or regard anybody's personality. In her view people's personalities which means their ego ought to have no place in the work. It is not your work or *X*'s work, but the Divine work, the Mother's work and it is not to be governed by your ideas or feelings or *X*'s ideas or feelings or *Y*'s or *Z*'s or *A*'s or anybody else's, but by the vision, perception and will of the Mother which does not express any human personality (if it did there would be no justification for the existence of this Asram), but proceeds from a deeper consciousness. It has been the great obstacle to the full success and harmony of the work that everybody almost has had this idea of his own personality, ideas, feelings etc. and more or less tried to insist on them—this has been the cause of most of the difficulties and of all the disharmony and quarrel. We want all this to stop; for when it stops altogether then there will be some possibility of the differences and turmoil ceasing and the work will better serve the purpose for which the Mother created it. That is why I have been trying to explain

to you about the necessity of subordinating the personality and doing the work for the Divine, not insisting on one's own personality, ego, ideas, feelings as the important thing." (CWSA 32: 440–441)

6.

"I do not think I said anywhere you had done anything contrary to *X*'s instructions in your work. I was speaking of what you had written in criticism of his way of doing things, and especially I wanted to remove your idea that the necessity of acting under his instructions meant a disregard of your personality or a desire on Mother's part to make you a puppet of *X*. Where there is a big work with several people working together for a purpose which is common to all and not personal to any, it cannot be done unless there is a fixed arrangement involving subordination and discipline in each worker. That is so everywhere, not here alone. *X* has to act under the Mother, carry out her instructions, work according to the ideas she has given him. She has laid down the lines on which he must work, and whatever he does must be on those lines. He is not free to change them or do anything contrary to the ideas given him. Where he makes decisions in details of the work, they must be in consonance with these lines and ideas. He has to report to the Mother, to take her sanction and accept her decisions on all matters. If the Mother's decisions are contrary to his proposals or contradict his

own ideas of what should be done, he has still to accept them and carry them out. The idea that the D.R. work is done according to his ideas and not the Mother's is an error. But all that is simply the necessity of the work, it is not a disregard of *X*'s personality. In the same way you have to carry out *X*'s instructions because he is charged by the Mother with the work and given authority by her. All the D.R. workers are in the same position and are supposed to carry out his instructions and keep him informed, because he is directly responsible to the Mother for everything and unless he has this authority he cannot carry out his responsibility. In the same way *Y* has been asked to carry out your instructions in the kitchen because you are at the head of the kitchen. All that is not a disregard of your personality or of *Y*'s personality or an assertion of *X*'s—it is the necessity of the work which cannot be smoothly done if there is not this arrangement. That is what I wanted you to understand so that you might see why the Mother wanted you to do like that, not for any other reason, but for the necessity of the work and so that it may be smoothly done." (CWSA 32: 442)

7.

"On the other hand as you are at the head of the work and the practical working is in your hands, you have every right to put any difficulties before *X* and ask for a solution. He on his side will often need information from you and may

need also to know what you think should be done. But if even after knowing, he thinks it right to follow his own idea of what should be done and not yours, you should not mind that. He has the responsibility and must act according to his lights subject to the sanction of the Mother. Your responsibility finishes when you have informed him and told him your idea. If his decision is wrong, it is for the Mother to change it.

I hope I have made the conditions clear. There is no necessity for you to agree with *X*'s ideas nor outside the work are you under any obligation to do what he wants you to do. There you are quite free. It is only in the work that there is this necessity in action—for the sake of the work.

I have written so much because you wanted to know what the Mother expected you to do. It is not meant as a pressure upon you, but only to explain things and show you the way and the reason for which they have to be done." (CWSA 32: 443)

8.

"It seems that there is friction between you and *X*. He says that you are keeping him at a distance from his work and asks to be given work elsewhere. The Mother does not approve of this and she wants all friction to be removed and work harmoniously done. Personal feelings ought not to be allowed to come into the work or disturb it in any

way. It is you and *X* who know the Bakery work thoroughly and are the best workers; for some time you two carried it on between you. Mother has relied on this collaboration for the Bakery work to go on well. If personal misunderstandings are allowed to break up the collaboration, it will be bad for the Mother's work and also for the sadhana of both. If misunderstandings arise, they ought not to be cherished in silence on either side, but cleared up by a frank and friendly explanation. I am writing to X to the same effect. Mother expects you both to remove all misunderstanding between you and work together in a friendly spirit." (CWSA 32: 443–444)

9.

"*In dealing with paid workmen, I sometimes behave in a very familiar way, sometimes in a neutral way and sometimes I get angry. How should I behave with them?*

None of these ways is the right one; the first weakens the authority, the second is not dynamic, the last is obviously not helpful. In all work the nearer one gets to an entire equanimity (which does not mean indifference) in the mind and the vital feeling, the better. A calm detached attitude, with a fundamental sympathy in it but not of the sentimental kind, a clear unbiased eye observing their character and reactions, and a quiet and firm authority without harshness, capable both of kindness and of quiet

severity, where severity is needed, would be the best attitude." (CWSA 35: 757)

10.

"To be angry and speak harshly to the workmen injures both the work and the sadhana." (CWSA 35: 757)

"*It seems to me that sadhaks could take up some of the work now being given to paid workers, electrical work for instance. I am ready to do this kind of work.*

I suppose it will have to come to that in the end—for the conditions and cost of having workmen and even servants is likely to become prohibitive if the new laws are made operative in the [*French*] colonies. But for the moment it is not practicable. The majority of the sadhaks have not the mentality that would be needed for this kind of work—workman's work—nor the necessary capacity of working together. A few zealous and enthusiastic sadhaks would not be able to meet the necessity." (CWSA 35: 758)

11.

"If anybody in the Asram tries to establish a supremacy or dominating influence over others, he is in the wrong. For it is bound to be a wrong vital influence and come in the way of the Mother's work. If you feel anything of the kind in

anybody, you are quite right to resist it and throw off the influence; to accept it would be bad both for him and you.

But there should be no quarrel or ill-feeling or keeping up of resentment or anger; for that too is not good for either. . . .

You must remember that just as the Mother uses your capacities and gives them their field, she must be able to do the same with the capacities of others. If she gives charge of a department of work to one, that must not stand in the way of her consulting or using others. Thus *X* and *Y* are in charge of the building work, but the Mother consults Z too because of his scientific knowledge as an engineer and he has the right to make suggestions or criticisms or indicate any possible improvements, although he is not in charge. So too the Doctor is not in charge of the dispensary, but he is associated with the medical work and the Mother makes use of his expert knowledge and experience, whenever necessary, or puts in his hands the treatment of a case of illness. It must be the same between you and Z.

It will be best if you fix in your mind and keep to the true rules of the work; then you will have no difficulty or trouble.

All the work should be done under the Mother's sole authority. All must be arranged according to her free decision. She must be free to use the capacities of each

separately or together according to what is best for the work and best for the worker.

None should regard or treat another member of the Asram as his subordinate. If he is incharge, he should regard the others as his associates and helpers in the work, and he should not try to dominate or impose on them his own ideas and personal fancies, but only see to the execution of the will of the Mother. None should regard himself as a subordinate, even if he has to carry out instructions given through another or to execute under supervision the work he has to do.

All should try to work in harmony, thinking only of how best to make the work a success; personal feelings should not be allowed to interfere, for this is a most frequent cause of disturbance in the work, failure or disorder.

If you keep this truth of the work in mind and always abide by it, difficulties are likely to disappear; for others will be influenced by the rightness of your attitude and work smoothly with you. Or, if through any weakness or perversity in them, they create difficulties, the effects will fall back on them and you will feel no disturbance or trouble." (CWSA 32: 408–409)

LXXIII—By a Change of Consciousness, Friction and Misunderstandings Can Be Cured

1.

"I have read your letter and I understand now what it is that you find trying—but they do not seem to us such serious things as to be rightly felt as a cause of disturbance. They are the kind of inconveniences that one always has when people live and work together. It arises from a misunderstanding between two minds or two wills, each pulling his own way and feeling hurt or vexed if the other does not follow. This can only be cured by a change of consciousness—for when one goes into a deeper consciousness, first, one sees the cause of these things and is not troubled; one acquires an understanding, patience and tolerance that makes one free from vexation and other reactions. If both or all grow in consciousness, then there arises a mutual understanding of each other's view-points which makes it easier to bring in harmony and smooth working. It is this that should be sought by the change within—to create the same harmony from outside by exterior means is not so easy, as the human mind is stiff in its perceptions and the human vital insistent on its own way of action. Let this be your main will—to grow yourself within and let the clearer and deeper consciousness come and have a good will for the same change to come in others

so that clarity and harmony may come in the place of friction and misunderstanding." (CWSA 31: 323)

2.

"The Mother knows perfectly well *X*'s character which is not alterable—it was for that very reason that she asked not only you but *Y* and everybody else in the Garden Department to avoid quarrelling with him even in case of extreme disagreement. Quarrels and clashes are a proof of absence of the Yogic poise and those who seriously wish to do yoga must learn to grow out of these things. It is easy enough not to clash when there is no cause for strife or dispute or quarrel; it is when there is cause and the other side is impossible and unreasonable that one gets the opportunity of rising above one's vital nature." (CWSA 32: 444)

3.

"It is not always possible in life and work to avoid friction and collision; but it can be minimised or deprived of its worst developments if one has a large understanding of the men around one with whom one has to deal and acts in that spirit. If on the other hand one sticks to one's own position, done without regard for the standpoint of others, that creates resistance and friction." (CWSA 31: 350)

4.

"The field of work does not change. What you are doing now, you will continue to do. It is in the attitude in the work, *especially in the relation with the other workers*, that the change must take place. Each one sees the work in his own way and believes it is the only true way, the only way that expresses the Divine Will. But none of these ways is completely true; it is only by rising above these divided conceptions that one can reach a better understanding of the Divine's Will. This means mutual understanding and collaboration instead of opposition and clash of wills and feelings." (CWM 14: 309)

5.

"You must remember what I wrote to you before that the Mother wants you to remain quiet and do your work as well as you can under the circumstances without allowing yourself to be upset by these things. Any improvement in the conditions of life or work in the Asram depends on each one trying to progress and open within to the true consciousness, growing spiritually within and not minding about the faults or conduct of others. No change can come by outer means; for this reason the Mother has long ceased to intervene outwardly in the clashes and disagreements between sadhaks. Let each progress inwardly and then only the outer difficulties will disappear or become negligible." (CWSA 32: 398)

LXXIV—Work and the Body

1.

"The first rule [*for overcoming weakness of the body*] is—there must be sufficient sleep and rest, not in excess but not too little.

The body must be trained to work, but not strained beyond its utmost capacity.

The outer means without the inner is not effective. Up to a certain point by a progressive training the body may be made more capable of work. But the important thing is to bring down the force for work and the rasa of work in the body. The body will then do what is asked of it without grudging or feeling fatigue.

Even so, even when the force and rasa are there, one must keep one's sense of measure.

Work is a means of self-dedication to the Divine, but it must be done with the necessary inner consciousness in which the lower vital and physical must also share.

A lazy body is certainly not a proper instrument for Yoga, it must stop being lazy. But a fatigued and unwilling body also cannot receive properly or be a good instrument. The proper thing is to avoid either extreme." (CWSA 31: 382–383)

2.

"If you are lazy, well, you will know what it means to be lazy.... You know, in life idlers are obliged to work ten times

more than others, for what they do they do badly, so they are obliged to do it again. But these are things one must learn by experience. They can't be instilled into you." (CWM 8: 181)

3.

"But it is quite natural. Exercise is always supposed to increase the appetite as the body needs more food to restore the extra expense of energy put out. Normally the more physical work the body has to do the more food it needs. On the other hand mental work requires no increase of food—that has been ascertained scientifically by experiment. Hunger may increase by other causes, but when it coincides with the taking up of play or physical exercise of a strenuous character, that is sufficient to explain it." (CWSA 31: 428)

4.

"Overstraining [*in work*] only increases the inertia—the mental and vital will may force the body, but the body feels more and more strained and finally asserts itself. It is only if the body itself feels a will and force to work that one can do that." (CWSA 31: 382)

5.

"But here ninety-nine times out of a hundred, it is a kind of half-inertia of the mind which makes you think that you

have too much work. If you observe yourself, you will find out that there is always something which pulls this way, something which pulls that way and then this kind of haziness as though you were living in cotton wool, in the clouds: nothing is clear." (CWM 5: 126)

6.

"If your body is aching after the work, it may be that you are doing too much for your physical strength and straining the body. When you work, the Force comes down in you, takes the form of vital energy and supports your body so that it does not *at the time* feel the strain; but when you stop, the body goes back to its normal condition and feels the effects—it has not yet been sufficiently opened to keep the Force. You must see whether this effect (of pain) continues; if it passes away, it is all right; otherwise you must take care and not overstrain yourself by doing too much." (CWSA 31: 382)

7.

"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)

8.

"If you mean by failure the weakness of the body, it is due probably to your having unduly strained it in obedience to rajasic vital impulses, an effect which was increased by vital relapses into tamas and the struggle of the vital attacks you had. But also it often happens even in the ordinary course of Yoga that physical strength is replaced by a Yogic strength or Yogic life force which keeps up the body and makes it work, but in the absence of this force the body is denuded of power, inert and tamasic. This can only be remedied by the whole being opening to Yoga shakti in each of its planes—Yogic mind force, Yogic life force, Yogic body force." (CWSA 29: 272—273)

9.

"When doing this work you had the Force in you and the right consciousness filling the vital and physical—

afterwards with relaxation the ordinary physical consciousness came up and brought back the ordinary reactions—fatigue, sciatica etc." (CWSA 29: 273)

10.

"Skill in works will come when there is the opening in the physical mind and the body. There is no need to be anxious about that now. Do your best and do not be anxious about it." (CWSA 29: 285)

11.

"*The body is naturally phlegmatic. But in working for You it will cease being 'tamasic'.*

Yes, this is just what will happen." (CWM 16: 180)

12.

"A good material work not exceeding normal capacities is most useful for keeping a good physical and moral poise." (CWM 14: 325)

13.

"Have you no intention of working physically yourself? Yet, it is quite indispensable for the welfare of the body." (CWM 14: 325)

14.

"*Mother,*

There is a depression. And most often I feel that my mind is tired. I don't know why. Today, my vital too is in terrible revolt. What can I do?

It is the same tiredness as that of the muscles when they do not work enough. Inactivity is just as tiring as over-activity. Not to work enough is just as bad as working too much.

The vital is a most bothersome character who prefers to be bad rather than to go unnoticed. You must teach him that he is not the master of the house." (CWM 16: 147)

15.

"Do not forget that to succeed in our yoga one must have a strong and healthy body.

For this, the body must do exercise, have an active and regular life, work physically, eat well, and sleep well.

It is in good health that the way towards transformation is found." (CWM 15: 136)

16.

"Let us work as we pray, for indeed work is the body's best prayer to the Divine." (CWM 14: 299)

17.

"To work for the Divine is to pray with the body." (CWM 14: 299)

18.

"We know, we have said this many a time, that all work is a prayer made with the body and that the true attitude in work is an offering to the Divine." (CWM 7: 386)

LXXV—Work and Illness

1.

"If the [*stomach*] pains are strong, you can abstain from work for a day or two till they have subsided. Of course if you feel that you suffer from anything else but liquid food, that settles the question—you can take liquid food only and if you take liquid food only then you will not be strong enough to work. But usually the thought takes a big part in determining these things—the mind has the impression that any solid food will hurt and the body follows—so naturally as a result any solid food does begin to hurt." (CWSA 31: 428)

2.

"I do not know why working with *X* must make good health impossible, unless you mean that there is too much work imposed on you,—but then the work can be lessened. In fact a complete rest and relief from the work can be arranged at present and for the future we can see afterwards. If you mean that working according to somebody else's ideas makes or keeps you ill, I do not see why it should be so. 999 people out of every 1000 do that—only a few are able to carry out their own ideas and even they have to a large extent to suit their ideas to those of other people in the actual execution of their work. If you mean that to have to work under discipline, doing things in

what you consider not the best way, makes you nervous, discouraged and ill, that is a pity. It would be so much better if you could leave the responsibility of the way of doing things to the Mother and do cheerfully what you have to do. However, if you cannot bring yourself to that attitude, some other way will have to be found hereafter. But at the present, if that is the case, to take rest as a relief would seem the only way." (CWSA 31: 571–572)

3.

"It is no use stopping work because of rheumatism (unless it is of the kind that disables one from working),—it only makes things worse." (CWSA 31: 572)

4.

"All these pains are a sign that you have put too great and sudden a strain on your physical system. The mind and vital were ready, but the body could not follow. You will have to diminish your work until you recover from the pains and fatigue. You may remember that I suggested to you to do only part of the sweeping work; it was for this reason that I was not sure that the physical system was ready. Now you should follow that—do only part of the work and ask *X* to arrange for the rest. See whether with this diminution and taking rest during the spare time the pain and the fatigue of the body disappear. If it does, then we can see what is best to do." (CWSA 31: 575)

5.

"You can take as much rest as you need from the work. The pains are evidently of the nervous system and are probably due to some resistance or obscurity there to the working of the Forces

... I trust that you will indeed take the opportunity of this rest to make a definite turn in your sadhana. A complete surrender of the mind and the vital both in work and in sadhana is the turn that is needed.." (CWSA 32: 409)

6.

"Rest until you are well. Do not be in a hurry to go to work before you have recovered your strength." (CWSA 32: 369)

7.

"You should have continuous sleep at night and sufficient—otherwise you will feel sleepy in the day which will be a hindrance to work." (CWSA 31: 439)

8.

"I don't think the lack of sleep when it comes is due to want of work; for even those who do no work at all, get good sleep. It is something else; but it must be got over." (CWSA 31: 443)

LXXVI—Dealing with Physical Things While Working

1.

"Material things are not to be despised—without them there can be no manifestation in the material world." (CWSA 29: 287)

2.

"Physical things have a life and value of their own which does not depend upon their price. To respect physical things and make a careful and scrupulous use of them is a part of the Yoga, for without that the mastery over matter cannot come." (CWSA 29: 287)

3.

"What you feel about physical things is true—there is a consciousness in them, a life which is not the life and consciousness of man and animal which we know, but still secret and real. That is why we must have a respect for physical things and use them rightly, not misuse and waste, ill-treat or handle with a careless roughness. This feeling of all being conscious or alive comes when our own physical consciousness—and not the mind only—awakes out of its obscurity and becomes aware of the One in all things, the Divine everywhere." (CWSA 29: 287–288)

4.

"It is very true that physical things have a consciousness within them which feels and responds to care and is sensitive to careless touch and rough handling. To know or feel that and learn to be careful of them is a great progress in consciousness." (CWSA 29: 288)

5.

"There is a consciousness in each physical thing with which one can communicate. Everything has an individuality of a certain kind, houses, cars, furniture etc. The ancient peoples knew that and so they saw a spirit or 'genius' in every physical thing." (CWSA 29: 288)

6.

"It was an act of ignorance.

Received in the right spirit the curtains could have lasted two or three years more. Received wrongly they might have gone to pieces within a month. Things also have a consciousness of their own." (CWM 14: 323)

7.

"The rough handling and careless breaking or waste and misuse of physical things is a denial of the Yogic Consciousness and a great hindrance to the bringing down of the Divine Truth to the material plane." (CWSA 29: 288)

8.

"Wanton waste, careless spoiling of physical things in an incredibly short time, loose disorder, misuse of service and materials due either to vital grasping or to tamasic inertia are baneful to prosperity and tend to drive away or discourage the Wealth Power. These things have long been rampant in the society and, if that continues, an increase in our means might well mean a proportionate increase in the wastage and disorder and neutralise the material advantage. This must be remedied if there is to be any sound progress.

Asceticism for its own sake is not the ideal of this Yoga, but self-control in the vital and right order in the material are a very important part of it—and even an ascetic discipline is better for our purpose than a loose absence of true control. Mastery of the material does not mean having plenty and profusely throwing it out or spoiling it as fast as it comes or faster. Mastery implies in it the right and careful utilisation of things and also a self-control in their use." (CWSA 29: 288–289)

9.

"*Mother, why do I lose things so often?*

Because you do not *keep* things sufficiently *in your consciousness*." (CWM 14: 323)

10.

"The Divine is in things also and that is why they must be treated with care." (CWM 14: 323)

11.

"Not to take care of material things which one uses is a sign of inconscience and ignorance.

You have no right to use any material object whatsoever if you do not take care of it.

You must take care of it not because you are attached to it, but because it manifests something of the Divine Consciousness." (CWM 14: 323)

12.

"In the organisation of work there was formerly a formidable waste due to the workers and sadhaks following their own fancy almost entirely without respect for the Mother's will; that was largely checked by reorganisation. But waste to a certain extent continues and is almost inevitable so long as the sadhaks and workers are imperfect in their will and consciousness, do not follow in spirit or detail the Mother's recommendations or think themselves wiser than herself and make undue room for their 'independent' ideas. Here too the Mother does not always insist, she watches and observes, intervenes outwardly more than in the individual lives of the sadhaks, but still leaves room for them to grow by consciousness

and experience and the lesson of their own mistakes and often employs an inner in preference to an outer pressure." (CWSA 32: 379)

13.

"I did not consider it necessary to say anything about the question of waste beyond assuring you that the undertaking of useless and unnecessary work only in order to keep the men employed was no part of the Mother's principle of action." (CWSA 32: 378)

14.

"We, ... are ignorant of the great conscious power that has made us what we are, and because we do not perceive the labour of the Sublime Worker, we ascribe the merit of the Work to ourselves." (CWM 14: 324)

LXXVII—If You Don't Know How to Take Care of Material Things, You Have No Right to Have Them

1.

"*Are bad habits, as for instance that of not keeping things in order, due to the vital?*

That depends. For example, children who have no order, who can't keep their things carefully but lose or spoil them—there are three reasons for this. Most often it is a child who lacks vitality. When it is like that, when it can't keep its things carefully and all is in disorder around it, this is always a sign of a lack of vitality; it does not have sufficient vitality to take interest in these outer things. The second reason is that it lacks interest in material life, the life of things, and that it has no discipline, doesn't discipline itself. For instance, children when they undress throw their clothes all over the place; or else, when they have finished playing, they leave their toys lying about; when they have written out their homework, everything is littered all around: the fountain-pen on one side, the notebook on another, the reader on a third, and then all these get lost. Unfortunately that's how it is with the great majority of the children here at the school, they lose everything. I have found books reduced to pulp because they had spent the whole night on a flower-pot and it had rained the next morning! When they were found, they were like gruel. But

that is rare. Pencils too—I have a collection of fountain-pens and pencils picked up thus, having been lost. These are absolutely undisciplined natures, those who have no method—and within themselves they don't have any method either. And moreover they despise things—so, as Sri Aurobindo says, they are not worthy of having them. People who don't know how to deal with things carefully, don't deserve to have them. Sri Aurobindo has often written on this subject in his letters. He has said that if you don't know how to take care of material things, you have no right to have them. Indeed this shows a kind of selfishness and confusion in the human being, and it is not a good sign. And then later when they grow up, some of them cannot keep a cupboard in order or a drawer in order. They may be in a room which looks very tidy and very neat outwardly, and then you open a drawer or a cupboard, it is like a battlefield! Everything is pell-mell. You find everything in a jumble; nothing is arranged. These are people with a poor little head in which ideas lie in the same state as their material objects. They have not organised their ideas. They haven't put them in order. They live in a cerebral confusion. And that is a sure sign, I have never met an exception to this rule: people who don't know how to keep their things in order — their ideas are in disorder in their heads, always. They exist together, the most contradictory ideas are put together, and not through a higher synthesis, don't you believe it: simply because of a

disorder and an incapacity to organise their ideas. You don't need to speak even for ten minutes with people if you can manage to enter their room and open the drawers of their tables and look into their cupboard. You know in what state they are, don't you?

... Naturally if you have about a dozen books and a very limited number of things, it is easier to keep them in order, but what one must succeed in doing is to put into order—and a logical, conscious, intelligent order—a countless number of things. That asks for a capacity of organisation.

Of course, if someone is very ill, has no strength to spare, then that's different. And yet even here, there are limits. I knew ill people who could tell you, "Open this drawer and in the left corner at the back you will find such and such a thing under such another"; the man could not move and take it himself, but he knew very well where it was. But apart from that, the ideal is to have some organisation, as for instance of the kind found in libraries where there are hundreds of thousands of books and where everything is classified (naturally it is not done by just one man), but it is a work in which each thing is so well classified that even if you bring a card and say "I want this book", a quarter of an hour later you have it or sometimes in five minutes. That is organisation. And yet there are rooms full of books there. But all this is the result of work perfected by a large number of men, the result of

a professional organisation. Well, for oneself, one must organise one's own things — and at the same time one's own ideas — in the same way, and must know exactly where things are and be able to go straight to them, because one's organisation is logical. It is your own logic — it may not be your neighbour's logic, not necessarily, it is your own logic — but your organisation being logical, you know exactly where a thing is and, as I told you, if that thing is displaced, you know it immediately. And those who can do that are generally those who can put their ideas into order and can also organise their character and can finally control their movements. And then, if you make progress, you succeed in governing your physical life; you begin to have a control over your physical movements. If you take life in that way, truly it becomes interesting. If one lives in a confusion, a disorder, an inner and outer chaos in which everything is mixed up and one is conscious of nothing and still less is master of things, this is not living." (CWM 6: 12–15)

2.

"The Mother had arranged for the good order of the distribution of dishes and their return. *X* was to arrange for all necessary facilities demanded by *Y*, *Y* was to be responsible for the good order of the work, and for that he was to have full control; for if he has not full control, he cannot be held responsible and good order becomes

impossible. All who are concerned with this work ought to report everything that is necessary to report to Y and help him to control this work; but it seems that no one is willing to do according to the Mother's arrangement and orders and each wants to be a law to himself. In that case there is no use in making complaints about insufficient dishes or anything else of the kind to the Mother. We refuse to issue more dishes under the present conditions. Already in a single year more than 250 items belonging to the dining-room have been broken, lost, stolen, taken away without authorisation by the sadhaks for their private use or have otherwise vanished." (CWSA 32: 377)

LXXVIII—No Man Can Remain Without Doing Works

1.

"For Janaka and others did works after they attained the Eternal and while they were in the body, did not cease from works. It cannot even be said that works though they need not necessarily cease after the attainment of the Eternal, yet need not continue. Particular works need not continue; rites & ceremonies need not continue; the life of the householder need not continue. But work continues so long as the body gross or subtle continues; for both the gross body and the subtle body, both the physical case & the soul-case are always part of Prakriti, and whatever is Prakriti, must do work. The Gita says this plainly

...

'For no man verily remaineth even for a moment without doing works, for all are helplessly made to do work by the moods to which Nature has given birth.' And again ... 'Even the Jnani moveth & doeth after the semblance of his own nature; for created things follow after their nature and what can forcing it do?" A man works according to his nature and cannot help doing work; but he can choose to what he shall direct his works, whether to his lower self or his higher, whether to desire or to God. The man who leaves the world behind him and sits on a mountaintop or in an asram, has not therefore got rid of works. If nothing

else he has to maintain his body, to eat, to walk, to move his limbs, to sit in *asan* and meditate; all this is work. And not only his body works; his mind is far more active than his body. If he is not released from desire, his work will bind him and bear fruit in relation to himself and others. Even if he is released from desire, his body & mind are not free from Karma until he is able to get rid of them finally, and that will not be till his *prarabdha karma* has worked itself out and the debts he has written against his name are wiped off. Even the greatest Yogi by his mere bodily presence in the world, is pouring out a stream of spiritual force on all sides; this action does not bind him, it is true, yet it is work and work which exercises a stupendous influence on others. He is ... busy doing good to all creatures by his very nature, even though he does not lift a finger or move a step. He too with regard to his body, gross & subtle, is ... he must let the gunas, the moods of Nature, work. He may control that work, for he is no longer the slave of Prakriti, but he cannot stop it except by finally leaving his body & mind through Yoga with the Eternal. Work therefore does not cease any more than Bhakti or Jnana." (CWSA 17: 205–206)

2.

"Kurvanneva [doing works indeed, and not refraining from them], says the Rishi, having his eye on the great dispute. Thou shalt do works & not abstain from doing them and the works are the works of this material world, those that

are to be done iha, here, in this life & body. Doing his works in this world a man shall be joyously willing to live the full span of years allowed to the mortal body. If he grows weary, if he seeks to abridge it, if he has haste in his soul for the side beyond death, he is not yet an enlightened soul, not yet divine. With this great admission the Vedanta can no longer be a mere ascetic gospel. Life—full & unabridged in its duration,—full and uncontracted in its activity is accepted, welcomed, consecrated to divine use. And the Rishi affirms his reason for acceptance—because so it is with thee & it is not otherwise than this. Because in other words this is the law of our being and this is the will of the Eternal. No man, as the Gita clearly teaches, can abstain from works, for even the state of withdrawal of the ascetic, even the self-collected existence of the silent Yogin is an act and an act of tremendous effect & profoundest import. So long as we are in manifest existence, so long we are in the jagati using, influencing & impressing ourselves on the jagat and we cannot escape from the necessity self-imposed on Himself by God within us. And it is so imposed for the reason already stated, because He has made this world for His habitation & as a means for His enjoyment & a thing for His delight—& this his great will & purpose no man can be allowed to frustrate. The wise mind, the illumined soul knowing this truth makes no vain attempt to square this circle; he accepts that which God intends fully & frankly and only seeks the best way to

fulfil God in this existence which he occupies on the way to another. For he knows that bondage and freedom are states of the outer mind, not of the inner spirit; for there is none free & none bound, none panting after liberation & none fleeing from bondage, but only the Eternal rejoicing secretly or manifestly in His innumerable habitations." (CWSA 17: 383–384)

LXXIX—In an Integral Yoga, Knowledge, Bhakti, Works, All Have Their Place

1.

"The ignorance underlying this attitude is in the assumption that one must necessarily do only work or only meditation. Either work is the means or meditation is the means, but both cannot be! I have never said, so far as I know, that meditation should not be done. To set up an open competition or a closed one between works and meditation is a trick of the dividing mind and belongs to the old Yoga. Please remember that I have been declaring all along an integral Yoga in which knowledge, Bhakti, works—light of consciousness, Ananda and love, will and power in works—meditation, adoration, service of the Divine have all their place. Have I written seven volumes of the *Arya* all in vain? Meditation is not greater than Yoga of works nor works greater than Yoga by knowledge—both are equal.

Another thing—it is a mistake to argue from one's own very limited experience, ignoring that of others, and build on it large generalisations about Yoga. This is what many do, but the method has obvious demerits. You have no experience of major realisations through work, and you conclude that such realisations are impossible. But what of the many who have had them—elsewhere and here too in the Asram? That has no value? ...

Do not conclude however that I am exalting works as the sole means of realisation. I am only giving it its due place.

You will excuse the vein of irony or satire in all this — but really when I am told that my own case disproves my whole spiritual philosophy and accumulated knowledge and experience, a little liveliness in answer is permissible." (CWSA 35: 746–747) (CWSA 29: 223–224)

2.

"This Yoga too is not a Yoga of knowledge alone—knowledge is one of its means, but its base being self-offering, surrender, bhakti, it is based on the heart and nothing can be eventually done without this base. There are plenty of people here who do or have done Japa and base themselves on bhakti, very few comparatively who have done the 'head' meditation; love and bhakti and works are usually the base—how many can proceed by knowledge? Only the few." (CWSA 29: 226–227)

3.

"You forget that men differ in nature and therefore each will approach the sadhana in his own way—one through work, one through bhakti, one through meditation and knowledge—and those who are capable of it through all together. You are perfectly justified in following your own way, whatever may be the theories of others—but let them

follow theirs. In the end all can converge together towards the same goal." (CWSA 29: 208)

4.

"There are three principal paths of yoga: the path of knowledge, the path of love and the path of works. So Sri Aurobindo says that it depends on each case and person. Some people follow more easily the path of knowledge, others follow more easily the path of love, of devotion, and others follow the path of works. He says that for the integral yoga the three must be combined and with them something else, but that everybody can't do everything at the same time and that there are people who need to be exclusive and to choose one of the three paths first in order to be able to combine them all later." (CWM 8: 43)

5.

"The triple Path of Works, of Love and of Knowledge uses some part of the mental being, will, heart or intellect as a starting-point and seeks by its conversion to arrive at the liberating Truth, Beatitude and Infinity which are the nature of the spiritual life." (CWSA 23: 33)

6.

" 'There is no other way than this.' By this expression it is not intended that Karmayoga is the only path of salvation for all men, but that the renunciation of desire is essential

to salvation; every Yogin, be he Jnani, Bhakta, or Karmi, must devote whatever work he may be doing to the Eternal. To the Karmayogin indeed this path is the only possible way; for it is the *swabhava* or nature of a man which decides the way he shall take. If a born Jnani becomes the disciple of a great Bhakta, however submissively he may accept his Master's teachings, however largely he may infuse his Jnana with Bhakti, yet eventually it is the way of Jnana he must take and no other. For that is his *swabhava* or nature, his *dharma* or the law of his being. If the Brahmin predominates in him, he will be drawn into Jnana; ... If he is born saint or avatar, he will harmonize all three, but still with one predominant over the others and striking the main note of his life and teaching. It is always the predominance of one or other, not its unmixed control, which decides the path; for as with the Karmayogin, the devotion of works to God brings inevitably the love of God, and love gives knowledge, so it is with the Bhakta; the love of God will of itself direct all his works to God and bring him straight to knowledge. So it is even with the Jnani; the knowledge of the Brahman means delight in Him, and that is Bhakti; and this love & knowledge cannot let him live to himself but will make him live to Brahman, and that is divine Karma. The three paths are really one, but the Jnani takes the right hand, the Bhakta the left hand and the Karmayogin walks in the middle; while on the way each prefers his own choice as

best and thinks the others inferior, but when they reach the goal, they find that none was inferior or superior, but it was one road they were following which only seemed to be three.” (CWSA 17: 200–201)

LXXX—Karma Yoga: The Yoga of Works

1.

"To do works in a close union and deep communion with the Divine in us, the Universal around us and the Transcendent above us, not to be shut up any longer in the imprisoned and separative human mind, the slave of its ignorant dictates and narrow suggestions, this is Karmayoga.

To work in obedience to a divine command, an eternal Will, a transcendent and universal impulsion, not to run under the whips of ego and need and passion and desire, and not to be goaded by the pricks of mental and vital and physical preference, but to be moved by God only, by the highest Truth only, this is Karmayoga.

To live and act no longer in human ignorance, but in divine Knowledge, conscient of individual nature and universal forces and responsive to a transcendent governance, this is Karmayoga.

To live, be and act in a divine, illimitable and luminous universal consciousness open to that which is more than universal, no longer to grope and stumble in the old narrowness and darkness, this is Karmayoga.

Whosoever is weary of the littlenesses that are, whosoever is enamoured of the divine greatnesses that shall be, whosoever has any glimpse of the Supreme within him or above him or around him let him hear the call, let

him follow the path. The way is difficult, the labour heavy and arduous and long, but its reward is habitation in an unimaginable glory, a fathomless felicity, a happy and endless vastness.

Find the Guide secret within you or housed in an earthly body, hearken to his voice and follow always the way that he points. At the end is the Light that fails not, the Truth that deceives not, the Power that neither strays nor stumbles, the wide freedom, the ineffable Beatitude.

The heavens beyond are great and wonderful, but greater and more wonderful are the heavens within you. It is these Edens that await the divine worker." (CWSA 12: 353–354)

2.

"All spiritual paths lead to a higher consciousness and union with the Divine and among the many paths one of the greatest is the Way of Works: it is as great as the Way of Bhakti or the Way of Knowledge.

Do not imagine that works are in their nature nothing but a bondage, they can be a powerful means towards liberation and divine perfection. All depends on the spirit in our works and their orientation towards the inner and the higher Light away from desire and ego.

Works are a bondage when they are done out of desire or for the sake of the ego, by a mind turned outwards, involved in the act and not detached and free,

bound to the ignorance of this lower nature." (CWSA 12: 348–349)

3.

"To create the union of his soul with the Divine Presence and Power through a perfect surrender of the will in all his activities, is the high aspiration of the seeker on the Way of Works.

To put off like a worn-out disguise the ignorant consciousness and stumbling will that are ours in our present mind and life-force and to put on the light and knowledge, the purity and power, the tranquillity and ecstasy of the divine Essence, the spiritual Nature that awaits us when we climb beyond mind, is the victory after which he reaches.

To make mind and heart and life and body conscious, changed and luminous moulds of this supramental Spirit, instruments of its light and power and works, vessels of its bliss and radiance, is the glory he assigns to his transfigured human members.

On one side a darkened mind and life, ignorant, suffering, spinning like a top whipped by Nature always in the same obscure and miserable rounds, on the other a soul touched by a ray from the hidden Truth, illumined, conscious, concentrated in a single unceasing effort towards its own and the world's Highest,—this is the difference between man's ordinary life and the way of the divine Yoga[.]" (CWSA 12: 349)

4.

"This consummation may be reached by ethical means through a certain manner of action and a certain spirit in action which is the essence of Karmamarga, the Way of Works, one of the three ways by which the spirit of man may see, embrace & become God. The first law of Karmamarga is to give up the natural desire for the fruits of our works and surrender all we do, think, feel and are into the keeping of the Eternal, and the second is to identify ourself with all creatures in the Universe both individually and collectively, realising our larger Self in others. These two laws of action together make what is called Karmayoga or the putting of ourselves into relation with that which is Eternal by means of and in our works. Before, then, we can understand what Karmayoga is, we must understand entirely and utterly what is this Eternal Being with whom we must put ourselves in relation and what are His relations with our self, with the phenomena of the Universe and with the creatures that people it." (CWSA 18: 404–405)

5.

"The progressive surrender of our ignorant personal will and its merger into a greater divine or on the highest summits greatest supreme Will is the whole secret of Karma Yoga. To bring about the conditions in which alone this vast and happy identity becomes possible and to work

out the lines we must follow to their end if we are to reach it, is all the deeper purpose of this discipline. The first condition is the elimination of personal vital desire, for if desire intervenes, all harmony with the supreme Divine Will becomes impossible. Even if we receive it, we shall disfigure its working and distort its dynamic impulse. To give up all desire, all insistence upon fruit and reward and success must be renounced from our will and all vital attachment to the work itself excised from our nature; for attachment makes it our own and no longer the Godhead's. The elimination of egoism is the second condition, not only of the rajasic and tamasic egoisms that twine around desire, but of the sattwic egoism that takes refuge in the idea of the I as the worker." (CWSA 12: 351)

6.

"A certain half-seeing and imperfect subordination of the personal will to an ill-understood greater Will and Power, a stumbling and occasional intuition or at best a brilliant lightning like intimation of its commands and impulsions, a confused, clouded and often grossly distorted execution of the little one seizes of a divine Mandate seems to be the uttermost that the human consciousness as it is at its best seems able to accomplish. Only by a growth into a greater superhuman and supramental consciousness whose very nature is to be attuned to the Divine can we achieve the true and supreme Karma Yoga.

This transformation is only possible after certain steps of a divine ascent have been mastered and to climb these steps is the object of the Yoga of Works as it is conceived by the Gita. The extirpation of desire, a wide and calm equality of the mind, the life soul and the spirit, annihilation of the ego, an inner quietude and expulsion or transcendence of ordinary Nature, the Nature of the three gunas and a total surrender to the Supreme are the successive steps of this preliminary change. Only after all this has been done, can we live securely in an infinite consciousness not bound like our mental human nature. And only then can we receive the Light, know perfectly the will of the Supreme, attune all our movements to the rhythm of its Truth and execute perfectly from moment to moment its imperative commandments. Till then there is no firm achievement, but only an endeavour, seeking and aspiration, all the stress and struggle of a great and uncertain spiritual adventure. Only when these things are accomplished is there for the dynamic parts of our nature the beginning of a divine security in its acts and a transcendent peace." (CWSA 12: 352)

LXXXI—In Karma Yoga the Aim Must Be the Divine and the Work Can Only Be a Means

1.

"Karma is a much simpler road [*to approach the Divine*]—provided one's mind is not fixed on the karma to the exclusion of the Divine. The aim must be the Divine and the work can only be a means. ...

Love, bhakti, surrender, the psychic opening are the only short cut to the Divine—or can be; for if the love and bhakti are too vital, then there is likely to be a seesaw between ecstatic expectation and viraha, *abhimāna*, despair, which will make it not a short cut but a long one, a zigzag, not a straight flight, a whirling round one's own ego instead of a running towards the Divine." (CWSA 29: 212)

LXXXII—One of the Lines of Karmayoga Laid Down by the Gita Is Equality

1.

"What then are the lines of Karmayoga laid down by the Gita? Its key principle, its spiritual method, can be summed up as the union of two largest and highest states or powers of consciousness, equality and oneness. The kernel of its method is an unreserved acceptance of the Divine in our life as in our inner self and spirit. An inner renunciation of personal desire leads to equality, accomplishes our total surrender to the Divine, supports a delivery from dividing ego which brings us oneness. But this must be a oneness in dynamic force and not only in static peace or inactive beatitude. The Gita promises us freedom for the spirit even in the midst of works and the full energies of Nature, if we accept subjection of our whole being to that which is higher than the separating and limiting ego. It proposes an integral dynamic activity founded on a still passivity; a largest possible action irrevocably based on an immobile calm is its secret,—free expression out of a supreme inward silence." (CWSA 23: 95)

2.

"And to our partial self-discipline we give various names and forms; we habituate ourselves by practice to the sense of duty, to a firm fidelity to principle, a stoical fortitude or

a religious resignation, a quiet or an ecstatic submission to God's will. But it is not these things that the Gita intends, useful though they are in their place; it aims at something absolute, unmitigated, uncompromising, a turn, an attitude that will change the whole poise of the soul. Not the mind's control of vital impulse is its rule, but the strong immobility of an immortal spirit.

The test it lays down is an absolute equality of the mind and the heart to all results, to all reactions, to all happenings. If good fortune and ill fortune, if respect and insult, if reputation and obloquy, if victory and defeat, if pleasant event and sorrowful event leave us not only unshaken but untouched, free in the emotions, free in the nervous reactions, free in the mental view, not responding with the least disturbance or vibration in any spot of the nature, then we have the absolute liberation to which the Gita points us, but not otherwise. The tiniest reaction is a proof that the discipline is imperfect and that some part of us accepts ignorance and bondage as its law and clings still to the old nature. Our self-conquest is only partially accomplished; it is still imperfect or unreal in some stretch or part or smallest spot of the ground of our nature. And that little pebble of imperfection may throw down the whole achievement of the Yoga!" (CWSA 23: 102–103)

3.

"The tranquillisation and mastery of these members is a first condition for the immunity of the understanding from error, ignorance and perversion. This purification spells an entire equality of the nervous being and the heart; equality, therefore, even as it was the first word of the path of works, so also is the first word of the path of knowledge." (CWSA 23: 313)

4.

"We proceed in our works with equality, without bondage to works and their results, in unison with the Highest, in unison with the universal, free from separate responsibility for our acts and therefore unaffected by their reactions. This which we have seen to be the fulfilment of the path of Works becomes thus an annexe and result of the path of Knowledge." (CWSA 24: 424–425)

5.

"Equality, renunciation of all desire for the fruit of our works, action done as a sacrifice to the supreme Lord of our nature and of all nature,—these are the three first Godward approaches in the Gita's way of Karmayoga." (CWSA 23: 105)

LXXXIII—Practise Some Kind of Karmayoga

1.

"I do not usually undertake the guidance of any except those who accept my own way of Yoga and show some signs of having a special call to it.

All I can suggest to him is to practise some kind of Karmayoga—remembering the Supreme in all his actions from the smallest to the greatest, doing them with a quiet mind and without ego-sense or attachment and offering them to Him as a sacrifice. He may also try or aspire to feel the presence of the Divine Shakti behind the world and its forces, distinguish between the lower nature of the Ignorance and the higher divine nature whose character is absolute calm, peace, power, Light and Bliss and aspire to be raised and led gradually from the lower to the higher.

If he can do this, he will become fit in time to dedicate himself to the Divine and lead a wholly spiritual life." (CWSA 29: 234–235)

2.

"I gather from X's letter to you that he has been following a very sound method in his practice and has attained some good results. The first step in Karmayoga of this kind is to diminish and finally get rid of the ego-centric position in works, the lower vital reactions and the principle of desire. He must certainly go on on this road until he reaches

something like its end. I would not wish to deflect him from that in any way." (CWSA 29: 235)

3.

"The completeness, the Siddhi of this way of Yoga—I speak of the separate path of Karma or spiritual action—begins when one is luminously aware of the Guide and the guidance and when one feels the Power working with oneself as the instrument and the participator in the divine work." (CWSA 29: 235)

4.

"That is the ordinary Karmayoga in which the sadhak chooses his own work but offers it to the Divine—it is given to him in the sense that he is moved to it through some impulsion of his mind or heart or vital and feels that there is some cosmic power or *the* cosmic Power behind the impulsion and he tries to train himself to see the One Force behind all actions working out in him and others the cosmic Purpose.

Once he has the ideal of the direct surrender he has to find the direct moving or Guidance—that is why he rejects all that he sees to be merely mental, vital or physical impulsions coming from his own or universal Nature. Of course the full significance of the surrender comes out only when he is ready." (CWSA 29: 238)

5.

"The division of the being of which you speak is a necessary stage in the Yogic development and experience. One feels that there is a twofold being, the inner psychic which is the true one and the other, the outer human being which is instrumental for the outward life. To live in the inner psychic being and in union with the Divine while the outer does the outward work, as you feel, is the first stage in Karmayoga. There is nothing wrong in these experiences; they are indispensable and normal at this stage." (CWSA 30: 344–345)

6.

"What you are experiencing is the true foundation of the spiritual life and realisation. It has three elements—first, the love which is the heart of Bhakti; then the descent of peace and equanimity which is the first necessary basis for realisation of self and the higher knowledge—what comes with it is the descent of the force which will work out in you the whole sadhana; thirdly, the feeling of a guiding presence or power which is the basis of Karma—of work and action founded in the spiritual consciousness." (CWSA 30: 320)

7.

"This is the attitude of the Karmayogin who puts himself in God's hands and does work for His sake only, knowing that

it is God's force that works in him. The result of that attitude of self-surrender is that the Lord of all takes charge and according to the promise of the Gita delivers His servant and lover from all sin and evil, the vr .ttis working in the bodily machine without affecting the soul and working only when He raises them up for His purposes." (CWSA 13: 35)

8.

"Whatever others may do, the Karmamargin must not remove himself from the field of action and give up work in the world; he is not called upon to abandon the objects of enjoyment, but to possess them with a heart purified of longing and passion. In this spirit he must do his work in this world and not flee from the struggle. Neither must he shrink from life as a bondage. He must realise that there is no bondage to him who is full of God, for God is free and not bound. He must therefore be ready to live out his life and work out his work calmly and without desire, seeking only through his life and actions to get nearer to Him who is the Lord of life and Master of all actions." (CWSA 17: 216)

9.

"Auroville is created to realise the ideal of Sri Aurobindo who taught us the Karma Yoga. Auroville is for those who want to do the Yoga of work.

To live in Auroville means to do the Yoga of work. So all Aurovilians must take up a work and do it as Yoga." (CWM 13: 222)

10.

"If a Yoga of works alone is chosen as the path, then one may remain in the *saṁsāra*, but it will be freely, as a field of action and not from any sense of obligation; for the Yogin must be free inwardly from all ties and attachments. On the other hand there is no necessity to live the family life—one can leave it and take any kind of works as a field of action.

In the Yoga practised here the aim is to rise to a higher consciousness and to live out of the higher consciousness alone, not with the ordinary motives. This means a change of life as well as a change of consciousness. But all are not so circumstanced that they can cut loose from the ordinary life; they accept it therefore as a field of experience and self-training in the earlier stages of the sadhana. But they must take care to look at it as a field of experience only and to get free from the ordinary desires, attachments and ideas which usually go with it; otherwise it becomes a drag and hindrance on their sadhana. When one is not compelled by circumstances there is no necessity to continue the ordinary life." (CWSA 28: 422)

11.

"What you received and kept in the work is indeed the true basic consciousness of Karmayoga—the calm consciousness from above supporting and the strength from above doing the work, with that the Bhakti which feels it to be the Mother's consciousness present and working. You know now by experience what is the secret of Karmayoga." (CWSA 32: 254)

12.

"This is the Karmayoga as it is laid down in the Gita as I have developed it for the integral spiritual life. It is founded not on speculation and reasoning but on experience. It does not exclude meditation and it certainly does not exclude bhakti, for the self-offering to the Divine, the consecration of all oneself to the Divine which is the essence of this Karmayoga are essentially a movement of bhakti. Only it does exclude a life-fleeing exclusive meditation or an emotional bhakti shut up in its own inner dream taken as the whole movement of the Yoga. One may have hours of pure absorbed meditation or of the inner motionless adoration and ecstasy, but they are not the whole of the integral Yoga." (CWSA 29: 218)

13.

"The third way [*of doing Yoga*] which is one of the two ways towards Yoga by works is the separation of the

Purusha from the Prakriti, the inner silent being from the outer active one, so that one has two consciousnesses or a double consciousness, one behind watching and observing and finally controlling and changing the other which is active in front. But this also means living in an inner peace and silence and dealing with the activities as if they were a thing of the surface. (The other way of beginning the Yoga of works is by doing them for the Divine, for the Mother, and not for oneself, consecrating and dedicating them till one concretely feels the Divine Force taking up the activities and doing them for one.)" (CWSA 29: 211)

LXXXIV—To Become a Karmayogin

1.

"If his nature can expand to the greatness of this discipline, if his eyes can avail never to lose sight of God, if he can envisage the godhead in his fellowmen, if he can empty his soul of its lust & longing, if he can feel all the glory & joy & beauty of the world passionlessly & disinterestedly as his own, if he can do his works in the world however humble or however mighty not for himself but for God in man and God in the world, if he can slay the sense of egoism in his works and feel them to be not his own but the Lord's, if he can put from him alike the coward's shrinking from death and the coward's longing for death, suffering neither the lust of long life nor impatience of its vanities & vexations, but live out his full term bravely, modestly, selflessly and greatly, then indeed he becomes the Karmayogin who lives ever close to the eternal & almighty Presence, moving freely in the courts of God, admitted hourly to His presence and growing always liker & liker in his spiritual image to the purity, majesty, might and beauty of the Lord. To love God in His world and approach God in himself is the discipline of the Karmayogin; to embrace all created things in his heart and divinely become God in his spirit, is his goal and ideal." (CWSA 17: 216–217)

LXXXV—In Working with Hands Put Consciousness into the Cells of Your Hand

1.

"*Sri Aurobindo speaks of a 'conscious hand'; what does that mean?*

... I have told you that no matter what you want to do, the first thing is to put consciousness in the cells of your hand. If you want to play, if you want to work, if you want to do anything at all with your hand, unless you push consciousness into the cells of your hand you will never do anything good—how many times have I told you that? And this is felt. You feel it. You can acquire it. All sorts of exercises may be done to make the hand conscious and there comes a moment when it becomes so conscious that you can leave it to do things; it does them by itself without your little mind having to intervene." (CWM 4: 403)

2.

"When the instruments of work—hands, eyes, etc.—become conscious and the attention is controlled, the capacity for work seems to have no bounds." (CWM 14: 307)

3.

"Skilful hands, a clear vision, a concentrated attention, an untiring patience, and what one does is well done." (CWM 14: 308)

4.

"Skilful hands, precise care, a sustained attention and one compels Matter to obey the Spirit." (CWM 14: 308)

5.

"*I try always to be more careful, but things get spoilt in my hands.*

Yes, this happens often; but you must call in more and more peace and let it enter into the cells of the body; then the suggestion of awkwardness can no longer have any effect." (CWN 16: 180)

LXXXVI—Other Quotations on Work

1.

The real work in Yoga is the realisation of the Divine and the transformation of the nature

"I prefer nowadays not to speak of the descent of the higher beings because my experience is that it leads in the minds of the sadhaks to a vain and often egoistic romanticism which distracts the attention from the real work, that of the realisation of the Divine and the transformation of the nature." (CWSA 28: 277–278)

2.

"There is no reason why your present condition should be more than a passing phase, unless you yourself choose that it should be otherwise. If it is the 'imposition' of the rule of Karmayoga on you that is the cause of your doubts, it is unjustified, because there is no imposition or compulsion, and you need only work if you wish to do so; if you think that by sitting in meditation only you will best progress, you are free to do it.

... As for the ground put forward that there is no precedent for progress during work or for such a method, nor have people in the past been able to do it, it amounts to a statement that there has never been any such thing as Karmayoga or a Karmayogi, that the Gita was never

written or was not founded on any truth of experience and that no Yogi ever did works as part of his sadhana. There seems to be some exaggeration in these statements from whatever quarter they may have been breathed into your mind. I have never said that the Supermind is working in the sadhaks here; I have said the contrary in many letters.

I say so much however only to indicate the quite gratuitous [*unjustified*] character of the affirmations on which these doubts are founded—from wherever they may come. But a detailed answer is hardly necessary; for meditation is not forbidden in this sadhana. Except for those who prefer to go through work alone, meditation and works and bhakti each in its place make up the foundations of the sadhana. But you are free to follow the way of meditation alone, as some others do, if you think that better." (CWSA 28: 343–344)

3.

"I have already said that you can spend the time in study as the sadhana is not active. If the sadhana were active then study could be done in the spare time, i.e. in times not given to work or meditation." (CWSA 31: 69)

4.

"*I saw X's notebook and found that there were big signatures of Mother. I thought: in what way is my work inferior to his so that Mother signs in my book with small signatures, as if she did not appreciate my work?*

A small signature does not mean lack of interest—usually it means more concentration than a large one." (CWSA 32: 422)

5.

"*In my ambition to serve the Mother, I asked for work, but now I find that I am losing the joy and cheerfulness I was enjoying before. If you think my withdrawal from the work will bring me relief, kindly grant it.*

It is a pity if you have to give up the work as your work had been of great help and was very much appreciated, especially by *X*—but if it comes in the way of the joy and cheerfulness which is necessary for the smooth inner progress, Mother cannot ask you to continue. The necessity of the sadhana is the first thing to consider." (CWSA 32: 418)

6.

"Work is prayer done with the body. With that effort in your work the Divine is satisfied; the eye of the Consciousness that has viewed it is indeed pleased. Not that from the human standpoint one cannot do better. For us, however, this particular endeavour [Ashram School] is one among many; it is only one movement in our Sadhana." (CWM 12: 118)

7.

"*You told me that if I get a miscellany of thoughts when I do not read during work, it is better to read, and since I have the Mother's 'express permission' for it the idea of its being improper should not come in. But does her express permission prevent one from feeling uneasy? Suppose she gives someone a sanction to read novels and newspapers—does it mean that one will not feel a lowering of consciousness while reading them? One might just read and read and not attend to the work at hand.*

The Mother's express sanction should remove any feeling of uneasiness due to the idea that it ought not to be done. As for lowering of consciousness, that is quite another thing—the sanction will not remove that. Also naturally one would have to read with one eye ready to be on the work at need, which might not be agreeable." (CWSA 32: 419)

8.

"Yes, that is correct. Mother does not care for the food for itself; but she allows *X* to do it as an offering. So with the work—although the work has its own importance. *Y* and *Z* are not given physical or practical external work because their energy cannot run in that direction and they cannot do it—not because training in physical and practical work is not good for all. In ideal circumstances a many-sided

activity of the being would be the best—but as yet it is not always practicable." (CWSA 32: 423)

9.

"*X told me that Mother requires one person to do exactly as she wants him to, but it is difficult to find anyone. I do not see how the complete obedience of one person would be sufficient for your work or affect the general atmosphere. I can understand that if there were complete obedience and peace and light in many people, it would hasten the progress of the work. Perhaps even one person would be a good example for many to follow, but I wonder how many would do so. Anyway, there is some mystery in this 'one man required'.*

Such ideas are rather a mental way of emphasising the desirability of something—here, of such persons existing, or of such a consummation being reached even in one person—than true in the form in which it is put. What can be said as true behind the statement is that each person arriving to a certain perfection of the Yogic state becomes a force for the expansion of the same Yogic force, a *point d'appui* if or it to work. How far that working through him can go depends on the person and on the receptivity of those with whom he comes into inner contact. Men like X, Y or Z for instance who have the push and communicating faculty do have an effect on others, even as it is, though it

cannot be said that they have reached anything near perfect perfection in obedience and peace and light, only an approach towards it. Naturally, the persons they affect are those who are capable of the contact." (CWSA 32: 423–424)

10.

"I do not quite understand on what you want the *anumati* [permission]. If it is about embroidery, I have said that to follow the existing arrangement, viz., when you have the will or the inspiration to do some work of embroidery, then to put it before the Mother and take her sanction or ask for her decision, is quite a right way to work according to the Mother's will; it is not at all inconsistent with surrender. But if you prefer to leave everything to the Mother and not suggest or propose anything yourself, you can do that.

Mother only asked me to write to you about the way things are usually done, because as she is not in the habit of thinking herself about these things, it is not as easy for her to remember and think out something as to decide upon suggestions put before her." (CWSA 32: 427)

11.

"As for the feelings about the Mother and that her love is only given for a return in work or to those who can do sadhana well, that is the usual senseless idea of the vital-physical mind and has no value." (CWSA 32: 482)

12.

"I do not know what you mean by our wanting to use you for all practical purposes. We did not insist on your doing any work for us; it was you who asked for work, and we gave you what could be found for you. But we could not very well invent work with the express purpose of creating an occasion for physically meeting the Mother. That has not been done for anybody." (CWSA 32: 492)

13.

"The Mother can give indications and open out possibilities [*about how to do the work*], but if the mind interferes and if they are not followed up, what can be done?" (CWSA 32: 427)

14.

"Sadhana and work done disinterestedly as part of the sadhana cannot be incompatible with each other—provided the work is attended to, sadhana can go on very well at the same time." (CWSA 29: 231)

15.

"It [*absorption in work*] depends on a certain extension and intensifying of the consciousness by which all activity becomes interesting not for itself but because of the consciousness put into it and, through the intensity of the energy, there is a pleasure in the exercise of the energy,

and in the perfect doing of the work, whatever the work may be." (CWSA 29: 250)

16.

"It is natural for the vital or even the mind to feel energised by something new—but for the physical plane the work always repeated is the foundation—so one has to be able at least to take a steady calm interest in it always." (CWSA 29: 251)

17.

"Thoughts of sadhana can go on very well along with work. To combine the inner spiritual consciousness and its growth with a consecrated outer activity is part of the Yoga." (CWSA 29: 253)

18.

"It is perfectly possible to do work in an entire emptiness without any interference or activity of the lower parts of the consciousness." (CWSA 29: 255–256)

19.

"The absorption in work is not undesirable—but the difficulty in turning inwards can only be temporary. 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)

20.

"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)

21.

"This tendency [*to be possessed by work*] has its advantage and disadvantage. It gets things done, but it prevents plasticity in the work. One must get free from the 'possession' by the urge of the energy, but keep the drive and be able to distribute it at will." (CWSA 29: 258)

22.

"On the contrary it is in the waking state that this realisation must come and endure in order to be a reality of the life. If experienced in trance it would be a superconscient state true for some part of the inner being, but not real to the whole consciousness. Experiences in trance have their utility for opening the being and preparing it, but it is only when the realisation is constant in the waking state that it is truly possessed. Therefore in this Yoga most value is given to the waking realisation and experience.

What you write about the work is correct; to work in this calm ever-widening consciousness is at once a *sādhanā* and a *siddhi*." (CWSA 30: 253)

23.

"My dear child,

X will come and see you, at my request, to make arrangements for his work in your department.

I ask you to receive him very affectionately, for he is my child just as you are, and to give him the opportunity to do some interesting work in which his capacities will be made good use of.

I would like him to feel at ease and also to feel that he is there to do *my* work.

My blessings." (CWM 13: 163)

24.

"Here every work represents something of the universe. When a new work is started here, new problems of the world come in." (CWM 13: 161)

25.

"*Many in Auroville say that an organised working is not desirable in Auroville; they are for spontaneous working.* Spontaneous work can be done only by a man of genius.

Is there anyone claiming to be a genius?...

Blessings." (CWM 13: 215)

26.

"*Y who works with me claims that he is not keeping good health and should be relieved from most of his work. He used to work for 9 hours; it came down to 5; now he wants to work only for an hour or so.*

This is quite ridiculous. If the man is paying nothing, you can tell him that if he reduces so much his work, we will be obliged to reduce his food proportionally—and then the health will become worse!

Blessings." (CWM 17: 264)

27.

"*Mother,*

I am very sorry about the muddle over X. He has told me several times that he is unhappy in his department and wants to come out, but he does not want to say so in the face of Y. He wants it to be said that he is changing to the Laundry because Mother wants it.

I do not like such a weakness going to the point of hypocrisy. Is there nobody else who could look after the Blanchisserie?

As for replacing Z in the Blanchisserie, unless X is frank and says to Y that he wants to go there and do that work, I do *not* want him, because my words are not diplomatic and I shall say the truth to Y whatever is the result.

In fact, it would be better to find somebody a little more courageous to work in the laundry.

Blessings." (CWM 17: 276)

28.

"*As I can see it, for myself the best thing would be to give up teaching and writing and go back to purely physical work and wait for the advent. But that would mean finding fault with you, because it is you who gave me these works against my apparent wishes.*

And I continue to give you the work. If you feel that a change is needed it can be in the *attitude* giving more importance to what is to be said and realised and using the past as a preparation for the future.

This is not a very difficult thing to do — and I am quite sure that you will easily do it.

With love and blessings." (CWM 17: 296–297)

29.

"To undo one thing in order to build another is not a good policy. Those who are consecrated and want to work for the Divine must be patient and know how to wait for things to be done at the right moment and in the right way." (CWM 14: 306)

30.

"Skill in works must be used knowingly." (CWM 14: 308)

31.

"*Those around me are not working as well as they used to.*

The way out? It is to take it coolly, not to mind and to go on with the work quietly... expecting that better days will come..." (CWM 13: 156)

32.

"*There is an all-round deterioration of work and workers.*

Yes, the disorder is general. The only help is *faith*." (CWM 13: 156)

33.

"It is the work which is important, not the way in which our little self does the work." (CWM 14: 314)

34.

"As a general rule it is better not to intervene in things that do not fall within one's own work." (CWM 14: 309)

35.

"Because I stopped the pranam for two days, you should not think that I was not with you. Wherever you work,

physically near or far, *I am always with you in your work and in your consciousness*. You ought to know that." (CWM 16: 165)

36.

"We have, every one of us, a role to fulfil, a work to do, a place which we alone can occupy." (CWM 14: 326)

37.

"*Sweet Mother,*

I have often noticed that the work we do is done much better and more quickly than if it were done by paid workers. I don't know why!

Because you are more conscious, or rather less unconscious." (CWM 16: 277)

38.

"*I think that the Mother doesn't like someone to go to another person's place except for Her work.*

That is because when people meet outside their work they usually indulge in idle chit-chat and it is not good for them." (CWM 17: 22)

39.

"*I have no peace, no love, no energy for work. What stage am I going through at the moment?*

A transition period in which you have become more conscious but have not yet gained control." (CWM 17: 96)

40.

"This is the wonder of the way of works that even enmity to God can be made an agency of salvation. Sometimes God draws and attaches us most swiftly to Him by wrestling with us as our fierce, invincible & irreconcilable enemy." (CWSA 12: 472) [Thoughts and Aphorism]

41.

"There are two works that are perfectly pleasing to God in his servant; to sweep in silent adoration His temple-floors and to fight in the world's battle field for His divine consummation in humanity." (CWSA 12: 495) [Thoughts and Aphorism]

42.

"He who seeks the Divine must consecrate himself to God and to God only." (CWSA 23: 70)

43.

"What he asks for (to stay here immediately as a resident sadhak) is not possible. There are only two conditions under which such a permission can be given—1st if after seeing personally the Mother was satisfied that the applicant would be able to do the sadhana here or could be given a chance to prepare himself here by work or

otherwise—or, if after practising Yoga outside it was seen that he had come to a point at which he could be admitted to the Asram." (CWSA 35: 584–585)

44.

"You can answer that the Asram is only a residence for a number of Sri Aurobindo's disciples to stay and practise Yoga. As the number has become very large, it was necessary to organise it as an Asram, but it still retains its original character. Outsiders are not usually allowed to reside, for there is no provision for that. There are no religious discourses nor any set course of instruction. All is done by meditation, work for the Divine and self-opening to receive knowledge and experience from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother." (CWSA 35: 598)

45.

"The Asram is a place where some of the disciples of Sri Aurobindo are allowed to live and practise Yoga or prepare themselves for it by work and service if they are not yet ready for the deeper inner practice. As a rule disciples are not allowed to live in the Asram unless they have been specially chosen and usually after some practice of the Yoga outside." (CWSA 35: 598)

46.

The disciples admitted into the Asram are expected to know enough of the Yoga (through Sri Aurobindo's writings

or otherwise) to practise it or prepare themselves for the practice—the principal requirement for progress in the Yoga is that they should be able to open their consciousness mentally, psychically and spiritually to the silent help and force which is given them from within; they must also follow implicitly the directions for work, action, life or their sadhana given them by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother." (CWSA 35: 598)

47.

"But for one who has the assured inner life, there is no dullness. Realisation within must be the first object; work for the Divine on the basis of the true inner self and a new consciousness, not on the basis of the old, is the result that can follow." (CWSA 35: 603)

48.

"To enter into the Divine either by the way of the thinking mind or by the way of the heart or by the way of the will in works or by a change of the psychological nature-stuff or a freeing of the vital force in the body is not enough; all this is not enough. Through all these together it must be done and by a change of our very sense and body consciousness even to the material inconscience which must become aware of the Divine and luminous with the Divine.

To be one with the Divine, to live in and with the Divine, to be of one nature with the Divine, this should be the aim of our Yoga." (CWSA 12: 357)

49.

"It is an error, we repeat, to think that spirituality is a thing divorced from life. 'Abandon all' says the Isha Upanishad '*that thou mayst enjoy all*, neither covet any man's possession. But verily *do thy deeds in this world* and wish to live thy hundred years; no other way is given thee than this to escape the bondage of thy acts.' It is an error to think that the heights of religion are above the struggles of this world. The recurrent cry of Sri Krishna to Arjuna insists on the struggle; 'Fight and overthrow thy opponents!' 'Remember me and fight!' 'Give up all thy works to me with a heart full of spirituality, and free from craving, free from selfish claims, fight! let the fever of thy soul pass from thee.' It is an error to imagine that even when the religious man does not give up his ordinary activities, he yet becomes too sattwic, too saintly, too loving or too passionless for the rough work of the world. Nothing can be more extreme and uncompromising than the reply of the Gita in the opposite sense, 'Whosoever has his temperament purged from egoism, whosoever suffers not his soul to receive the impress of the deed, though he slay the whole world yet he slays not and is not bound.' The Charioteer of Kurukshetra driving the car of Arjuna over

that field of ruin is the image and description of Karmayoga; for the body is the chariot and the senses are the horses of the driving and it is through the blood stained and mire sunk ways of the world that Sri Krishna pilots the soul of man to Vaicuntha." (CWSA 13: 12)

50.

"Active participation in an outside work is sometimes useful to a sadhak in the early stages of his sadhana so that he may learn equanimity; but the utility of it for a sadhak of the Asrama is not very clear. Personal or family work is not part of the divine Work unless as in *X*'s case it is dedicated to the Divine—for he gives all its profits here. But in your case it is family property and that is not possible. We are therefore rather doubtful as to how this would fit in at the present stage of your sadhana." (CWSA 35: 753)

51.

"*How is it that people here become more soft than in ordinary life and a little hardship or discomfort becomes unbearable? Is it because they live a life of ease here doing no physical work?*

What you have noticed is quite correct. It comes from a wrong movement which takes the rejection of asceticism as if it were a sanction for the indulgence of the body in whatever comfort it can get. The right principle is that one should be free from attachment and be able to do without

things but also able to have them and use them without being bound or affected. Very few have taken it in that way—the vital has chosen to turn a deaf ear to anything said in that direction and to take as a right the comforts and conveniences given. What you have noted is one of the consequences." (CWSA 35: 662)

52.

"The only danger then is that when this body of things becomes prominent and attractive, numbers may rush into it and try to follow the externals without realising and reproducing in themselves the truth and the power of the real thing that made it possible. It was that against which I warned you when there came the first possibility of a considerable expansion. It is your business to enlarge your field of work and the work itself but not at the cost of any lowering or adulteration of its spirit. The first condition you have to assure is that all who have the work in hand or share in its direction must be of the spirit and work from the self outward; they must be men of the Yoga; but, secondly, all who enter in must have this imposed on them as the thing to be developed, must learn to develop this self-realisation first and foremost and the work only as its expression. The safety of the work lies in a strict adherence to this principle. The majority of the educated people of Bengal care only to get something done—and are not troubled by the fact that really nothing sure and lasting

does get done or else only something that is likely to do as much harm as good; they care nothing about the spiritual basis of life which is India's real mission and the only possible source of her greatness, or give to it only a slight, secondary or incidental value, a something that has to be stuck on as a sentiment or a bit of colouring matter. Our whole principle is different and you have to insist on our principle in all that you say and do. Moreover, you have got a clear form for your work in association and that form as well as the spirit you must maintain; any loosening of it or compromise would mean confusion and an impairing of the force that is working in your sangha." (CWSA 36: 237) Pondicherry May 1920

53.

"We cannot approve of your idea—there are already enough intellectuals in the Asram and the room-keeping intellectual is not a type whose undue propagation we are disposed to encourage. Outside work is just what is necessary to keep the equilibrium of the nature and you certainly need it for that purpose. Also your presence in the D.R. [*Dining Room*] is indispensable. For the rest instead of getting vexed with *X* or *Y* you should seek the cause of these things in yourself—that is always the true rule for a sadhak. You are sometimes at your best and then things go on very well; but sometimes you are not at all at your best and then these misunderstandings arise. The remedy

therefore is to be at your best always—not to be in your room always, but to be in your best and therefore your true self always." (CWSA 35: 742)

54.

"*I find it hard to work while remaining in the Yogic consciousness. My inner state is too passive.*

It is possible to work through the passive state even, provided one feels that one is not doing the work but it is being done through one." (CWSA 35: 748)

55.

"An increasing advance on the road to the entire psychic change is what is most important in the sadhana, for that is the straight road to the spiritual transformation. Devotion, harmony and scrupulousness in work, a growing inner perception and consciousness, more and more fading of the more vehement movements of the vital ego are among the more prominent landmarks on the road." (CWSA 35: 842–843)

56.

"Devotion to the Divine, fidelity to his work and obedience to his will are the first supports of the Yoga. On these pillars all the rest can be supported." (CWSA 35: 841)

57.

"Clarity of knowledge and inner self-vision, subjugation of the ego, love, scrupulousness in selfless and dedicated works, are the four wheels of the chariot of Yoga. One who has them will progress safely on the path." (CWSA 35: 840)

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55. Descent of Higher Consciousness Specific
56. Higher Destiny by Descent of Higher Consciousness
57. Nexus Between Psychic Being and Higher Consciousness
58. Cure of Illness by Higher Consciousness
59. Descent Can Transform Our Being
60. How the Descent Helps the Evolution
61. Suffering Is Not Indispensable Nor Necessary
62. Causes and Remedies of Suffering
63. Through Yoga One Can Come Out of Suffering
64. Suffering as Means of Progress
65. Release from Suffering in Indian Philosophy
66. How to Account for Suffering If Existence Is Delight
67. Delight Secretly Supports All Our Sufferings
68. Purity in Sadhana

One compilation is available only in printed book form: *Sadhana of the Psychic Being*