

Pain
THE HAMMER OF the Gods

Second Edition

A COMPILATION FROM THE WORKS OF
Sri Aurobindo and the Mother

Compiled by Jamshed M Mavalwalla

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Sri Aurobindo Society
AUROPUBLICATIONS
POWERFUL THOUGHTS, INSPIRING VISION

Pain, the Hammer Of the Gods

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

As part of our series of comprehensive compilations, we present *Pain the Hammer of the Gods*. This compilation does not deal with physical pain but rather explores how pain is used by the Divine as a hammer to break the dead resistance in the human heart, enabling human beings to grow spiritually and allowing pain to act as a catalyst for rapid spiritual development.

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

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

The 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.

Jamshed M. Mavalwalla

Pain, the Hammer Of the Gods

"Pain is the hammer of the Gods to break
A dead resistance in the mortal's heart
His slow inertia as of living stone.
If the heart were not forced to want and weep,
His soul would have lain down content, at ease,
And never thought to exceed the human start
And never learned to climb towards the Sun."

(CWSA 34: 443)

Contents

I—What Is Pain 1

II—Pain Is Only Ananda Turned Against Itself, Distorted Bliss of Existence.....10

III—Pleasure and Pain Are Equally a Degradation of Ananda 13

IV—Pain Came Due to the Fall of Sachchidananda into Dividing Consciousness 14

V—Pain and Pleasure Govern the Human Being's Primary Nature.19

VI—Why the Ordinary Man Has Pleasure and Pain, Joy and Grief.26

VII—Pain and Pleasure Are the Result of Association and Their Seat Is in the Mind 32

VIII—If Pleasure Is the Object of Life, Then We Make Pain the Condition of Life.....37

IX—Fragmentation of Delight in the Ego Becomes Pain and Sorrow 39

X—Pain Is the Result of Ignorance 43

XI—Pain Is the Result of Limitation 55

XII—Pain, the Consequence of Rajasic Works 58

XIII—Desire Is the Cause of Pain 60

XIV—To Live Only by the Body Is to Be Subject to Pain and Suffering 64

XV—Impurities in the Body Show Themselves as Disease or Pain.66

XVI—Pain Can Be Due to Wrong Thinking and Strong Imaginations 69

XVII—Attachment to Outward Pleasures and Pains Is the Cause of the Soul's Sufferings 70

XVIII—The Lower Planes of Inconscient Existence Are Painful Without Ananda 71

XIX—Pain Is the Hammer to Break a Dead Resistance 76

XX—The Real Ethical Soul Accepts Pains and Sufferings as an Opportunity for Its Growth 79

XXI—The Soul May Accept Painful Experiences for Growth, a Stimulant of Rapid Spiritual Development 82

XXII—Pain Comes to Teach Us Many Things 85

XXIII—In Evolution, Pain Can Be a Temporary Stage of Development Necessary to Prepare a Higher Race 95

XXIV—With Pain, All Creation Comes 98

XXV—Without the Experience of Pain, We Would Not Realise the Infinite Value of the Divine Delight 99

XXVI—Overcoming Painful Situations in Sadhana 101

XXVII—Overcoming Painful Situations in Ordinary Life 136

XXVIII—Pain Should Be Thrown Off With the Same Resolution as the Vital Disturbances 155

XXIX—Realisation That Everything Is Sachchidananda Drives Out Grief and Pain 156

XXX—Through Concentration, One Can Place Oneself in Infinity and Eternity; Then Even Deep Pain Can Be Swept Away 158

XXXI—Once the Love for the Divine Is Awakened in the Cells, Even If There Is Pain, the First Movement Is to Offer Themselves, to Give Themselves Spontaneously 160

XXXII—When You Are in the Exclusive Divine Presence, Pain Goes Away 162

XXXIII—By Becoming One-Minded in the Sadhana, One Can Escape from the Painful Circle of Old Hurt Feelings 163

XXXIV—Turn the Consciousness Upward and the Pain Vanishes. 165
XXXV—Elimination of Pain by Eliminating the Ego-Determined Reactions 167
XXXVI—Immobility Can Cut the Contact Between Pain and the Brain, and Pain Can Disappear 170
XXXVII—When in Pain After Immobility, Let There Be an Inner Aspiration to Surrender 173
XXXVIII—Pain Is Greatest in the Nerves That Have Strong Spontaneous Receptivity 175
XXXIX—By Yoga We Can Rise Out of Pain and Grief into Bliss 176
XL—Union with the Divine Causes Pain to Disappear 184
XLI—In Surrender, One Meets Difficulties Without Pain 186
XLII—When the Divine Master of the Yoga Takes Up Our Yoga, Pleasure and Pain Will Be Transformed into Delight..... 187
XLIII—Pain or Sorrow Can Awaken the Need for Spiritual Experience..... 188
XLIV—Bearing Pain Increases Our Capacity to Bear It 190
XLV—With the Power of Detachment from the Body, the Mind Will Not Be Affected by Pain..... 193
XLVI—By One's Will, the Mental Being Can Overcome the Habitual Nervous Reactions to Eliminate Pain..... 196
XLVII—Dispelling Psychological Pain..... 201
XLVIII—Seek Not After Pain, for That Is Not the Divine's Will 202
XLIX—The True Object and Condition of Life Is Ananda 204
L—Ananda, Delight, Supports All Life and Activity 208
LI—Ananda Is the Divine Counterpart of the Lower Emotional and Sensational Being..... 212

LII—Delight Becomes Grief and Joy, Pain and Pleasure, Under the Conditions of Mind, Life and Body 215

LIII—In Sadhana, Spiritual Sacrifice Means an Inner Offering to the Divine, Which Is a Joyful Thing, Not Painful 218

LIV—With Absolute Self-Giving and Self-Forgetfulness in Total Consecration, Suffering and Pain Disappear and Are Replaced by Joy 225

LV—If the Psychic Change Is Complete, Then the Process of Spiritual Transformation Is Painless 227

LVI—Into the Soul, No Pain or Grief Can Enter 229

LVII—The Characteristic of Consciousness Is the Emotion of Pleasure in Existence That Outlasts All Pain 230

LVIII—Once One Grows into the Consciousness and Power of the Infinite Spirit Within, All Suffering Passes Away into an Immeasurable Delight 232

LIX—In the Full Manifestation, Pain and Suffering Are Transformed into Ananda 234

LX—In the Divine Supramental Gnosis, Pleasure and Pain Disappear in Bliss 238

LXI—How the Lover of Nature, the Artist, the Poet, the Seeker of Knowledge, the Musician, and the God-Lover Transform Egoistic Pleasure and Pain into Delight 244

LXII—The Ineffable Joy of Love Can Sweep Away From the Universe the Burning Pain of Separation from the Divine 251

LXIII— The Psychic Being Delights Equally in All Its Experiences of Pleasure, Pain, and Indifference, Drawing Strength from and Growing Through All That Touches It 253

LXIV—Our Secret Soul Takes Pleasure in Strife and Even in Suffering 258

LXV—Obey the Voice of the Soul, Even if It Causes Pain..... 261

LXVI—The Sorrow the Psychic Feels Occurs When the Divine Is Rejected..... 262

LXVII—The Seekers of the Divine Seek Something So Precious and Supreme That a Whole Lifetime of Painful Effort Is Nothing..... 264

LXVIII—The Divine Mother Has Stooped to Descend into World-Pain So That She May End Pain 265

LXIX—Vedantic and Upanishadic Idea of Not Living in Pain and Grief..... 267

LXX—He Who Would Save the Race Must Share Its Pain 270

LXXI—Do Not Feel Pain or Shame Due to Ideas of Incapacity, Defects, Failures, Difficulties, or Stumblings..... 276

LXXII—The Tamasic Unwillingness to Accept Pain Is a Weakening and Degrading Thing..... 277

LXXIII—The Mother Was Pained to See the Ordinary and Futile Reactions of a Sadhaka 279

LXXIV—Vibrations of Pain and Sorrow Can Enter You 281

LXXV—To Transform Pain into Pleasure Is a Perversion and Should Not Be Done..... 283

LXXVI—Creating an Atmosphere Where There Is No Pain or Misery According to Buddha's Teachings..... 285

LXXVII—Those Who Have Died Have Not Suffered Any Painful or Terrible Changes of Condition..... 289

LXXVIII— The Hostile Forces Touch the Neglected Spot and Make It Painfully Evident So That One Will Be Forced to Change 292

LXXIX— In Suicide, the Last Moments of a Person Are Filled with Disgust and Pain, and They Continue to Relive the Final Scene of Their Life 295

LXXX—How to Conquer the Karma of Suicide in Past Lives 303

LXXXI—Samata Is the Capacity to Receive All Pain with a Calm and Equal Mind 306

LXXXII—In Perfect Samata, Grief and Pain Change into Bliss 315

LXXXIII—How to Overcome the Impacts That Cause Grief and Pain Through Samata 318

LXXXIV—When the Consciousness Ceases to Be Human, Removing Sexual Activity Will Not Be Painful 325

LXXXV—Humanity that Is Ready for a Hard, Painful Life That Would Lead Towards Future Transformation Can Be Ready for the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo 327

LXXXVI—Under Pain and Suffering, Radha's Love Is Unshaken .. 329

LXXXVII—The Divine Mother's Pain Is Suffering Through Identity 330

LXXXVIII—The Mother's Prayers 332

LXXXIX—When Sri Aurobindo Was in Possession of Supramental Power, He Could Perfectly Heal Pain 333

XC—Sri Aurobindo's Experiments with Pain Giving Ananda 335

XCI—Other Quotations on Pain 347

Other Comprehensive Compilations by Jamshed M. Mavalwalla .. 369

I—What Is Pain

1. Pain is a sensational reaction to a particular contact

"The fact that a particular sort of contact makes me uncomfortable is nothing in itself except in so far as it throws light upon the general causes of pain; the nature, origin and purpose of pain is the fundamental truth that I seek about the sensational reaction to contact. This law of pain, moreover, is not so fundamental as the truth about the nature, origin and purpose of sensation and contact themselves, of which pain is a particularity, an example or a modification." (CWSA 12: 77)

2. Pain is the system's way of saying that it objects to a particular contact because of want of harmony

"Pain, grief, dislike etc. are merely the system's way of saying that it objects to a particular contact because of want of harmony. The system cannot bear an inharmonious contact or even a pleasant one if it is too intense or too prolonged. Disgust, fear, horror, shame are attempts of the system to repel the unpleasant contact and defend itself." (CWSA 11: 1467)

3. **Pain is Nature's device for enforcing a principle of self-protection, so that the vulnerable nervous and bodily parts of us may not unduly rush upon self-destruction to embrace it**

"The mind recoils by pain and dislike from the adverse strokes of life; that is Nature's device for enforcing a principle of self-protection, *jugupsā,* so that the vulnerable nervous and bodily parts of us may not unduly rush upon self-destruction to embrace it: it takes joy in the favourable touches of life; that is Nature's lure of rajasic pleasure, so that the force in the creature may overcome the tamasic tendencies of inertia and inactivity and be impelled fully towards action, desire, struggle, success, and by its attachment to these things her ends may be worked out." (CWSA19: 191)

4. **Pain is in the nature of a nervous and physical recoil from a dangerous or harmful contact**
5. **Pain is a part of what the Upanishad calls *jugupsā*, the shrinking of the limited being from that which is not himself and not sympathetic or in harmony with himself**
6. **Pain's impulse is one of self-defence against 'others'**

"Pain is in the nature of a nervous and physical recoil from a dangerous or harmful contact; it is a part of what the Upanishad calls *jugupsā*, the shrinking of the limited being from that which is not himself and not sympathetic or in harmony with himself, its impulse of self-defence against 'others'." (CWSA 21: 115)

7. Pleasure and pain are the vital or sensational deformations given by the lower energy to the spontaneous Ananda or delight of the spirit when brought into contact with her workings

"From the Vedantic point of view we may say that pleasure and pain are the vital or sensational deformations given by the lower energy to the spontaneous Ananda or delight of the spirit when brought into contact with her workings. And we may say from the same view-point that liking and disliking are the corresponding mental deformations given by her to the reactive Will of the spirit that determines its response to her contacts. These dualities are the positive and negative terms in which the ego soul of the lower nature enjoys the universe. The negative terms, pain, dislike, sorrow, repulsion and the rest, are perverse or at the best ignorantly reverse responses: the positive terms, liking, pleasure, joy, attraction, are ill-guided responses or at the best insufficient and in character inferior to those of the true spiritual experience." (CWSA 19: 413–414)

8. Pain and grief are perverse terms of Ananda
9. Pain and grief veil the Ananda here

"There is no possibility of sorrow; for all is seen as Sachchidananda and therefore in the terms of the infinite conscious existence, the infinite will, the infinite felicity. Even pain and grief are seen to be perverse terms of Ananda, and that Ananda which they veil here and for which they prepare the lower existence (for all suffering in the evolution is a preparation of strength and bliss) is already seized, known and enjoyed by the soul thus liberated and perfected. For it possesses the eternal Reality of which they are the appearances." Isha Upanishad (CWSA 17: 38)

10. All pain is a secret and violent ecstasy

Aphorism 533 – See God everywhere and be not frightened by masks. Believe that all falsehood is truth in the making or truth in the breaking, all failure an effectuality concealed, all weakness strength hiding itself from its own vision, all pain a secret and violent ecstasy. If thou believest firmly and unweariedly, in the end thou wilt see and experience the All-true, Almighty and All-blissful." (CWM 10: 359)

11. Pain is only a minor term, natural or perverse, in an inferior formula of this divine Bliss of being

"Human joy & pleasure, even human grief & pain, are only minor terms natural or perverse in an inferior formula of this divine Bliss of being." (CWSA 14: 360)

12. Pain is an effect of the universal Delight produced in the recipient by incapacity

"As pain is an effect of the universal Delight produced in the recipient by incapacity, as incapacity is a disposition of the universal Will-force, so ignorance is a particular action of the universal Knowledge." (CWSA 13: 489)

13. Pain is a contrary effect of the one delight of existence resulting from the weakness of the recipient, his inability to assimilate the force that meets him, his incapacity to bear the touch of delight that would otherwise be felt in it

14. Pain is a perverse reaction of consciousness to Ananda

15. Pain is not itself a fundamental opposite of Ananda

16. Pain can pass into pleasure and pleasure into pain and both can resolve into the original Ananda

"All multiplicity resolves itself into a manifoldness of the one Being, the one Consciousness of Being, the one Delight of Being. Thus in the duality of pleasure and pain, we have seen that pain is a contrary effect of the one delight of existence resulting from the weakness of the recipient, his inability to assimilate the force that meets him, his incapacity to bear the touch of delight that would otherwise be felt in it; it is a perverse reaction of Consciousness to Ananda, not itself a fundamental opposite of Ananda: this is shown by the significant fact that pain can pass into pleasure and pleasure into pain and both resolve into the original Ananda." (CWSA 21: 515)

17. There are states of consciousness in which pain is a violent backwash of the waters of universal delight

"There it is necessary for us—otherwise there is no issue from the problem—to realise that the terms in which our present consciousness renders the values of the universe, though practically justified for the purposes of human experience and progress, are not the sole terms in which it is possible to render them and may not be the complete,

the right, the ultimate formulas. Just as there may be sense-organs or formations of sense-capacity which see the physical world differently and it may well be better, because more completely, than our sense-organs and sense-capacity, so there may be other mental and supramental envisagings of the universe which surpass our own. States of consciousness there are in which Death is only a change in immortal Life, pain a violent backwash of the waters of universal delight, limitation a turning of the Infinite upon itself, evil a circling of the good around its own perfection; and this not in abstract conception only, but in actual vision and in constant and substantial experience. To arrive at such states of consciousness may, for the individual, be one of the most important and indispensable steps of his progress towards self-perfection." (CWSA 21: 57–58)

18. Pleasure and pain are deformations caused by the disturbance of harmony between our consciousness and the force that applies pleasure and pain

19. Pleasure and pain are deformations caused between our knowledge and will, a breaking up of their oneness by a descent to a lower plane in which they are limited, divided in themselves, restrained from their full and proper action, and at odds with other-force, other-consciousness, other-knowledge, and other-will

"Both pleasure and pain, both joy and grief are deformations caused by the disturbance of harmony between our consciousness and the force it applies, between our knowledge and will, a breaking up of their oneness by a descent to a lower plane in which they are limited, divided in themselves, restrained from their full and proper action, at odds with other-force, other-consciousness, other-knowledge, other-will." (CWSA 23: 495)

20. Pain & pleasure are not permanent and definite entities

21. The pain is a heterogeneous conglomeration, sometimes a warring agglomeration of the feelings & impulses belonging to the various husks in which the true Self is wrapped

"Pain & pleasure, good & evil are therefore not permanent and definite entities; the former are a heterogeneous conglomeration, sometimes a warring agglomeration of the feelings & impulses belonging to the various husks in which the true Self is wrapped." (CWSA 17: 150)

22. Grief and pain may be said to be universal forces, for there are waves of these things that arrive and invade the being often without apparent cause

"They [*pain and misery*] are perhaps rather the result of the action of universal forces—but in a certain sense grief and pain may be said to be universal forces—for there are waves of these things that arrive and invade the being often without apparent cause." (CWSA 30: 287)

II—Pain Is Only Ananda Turned Against Itself, Distorted Bliss of Existence

1.

"All existence is the existence of the Eternal, the Infinite, the Divine, the Ineffable—existence in Time no less than existence in Eternity, existence in the finite no less than existence in the Infinite, of the Many no less than of the One, of the Personal no less than of the Impersonal, of the individual and the cosmos no less than of the supercosmic, of the relative no less than of the Absolute. *Ekam evadvitiyam Brahma*.

The Eternal is in his very truth of being Existence, Consciousness and Bliss of existence. These three are a trinity and inseparable—they are not three but one; it is only in a certain play of the Manifestation that they can be distinguished and separated from each other or turned phenomenally into their opposites. … What appears to us as Inconscience is only a veiled or involved consciousness or else a consciousness to which our mind or sense has no access. What affects us as pain or suffering is only Ananda turned against itself, a distorted and tortured Bliss of existence. These contradictions are real in the Ignorance and because of the Ignorance, but to the true consciousness they are only phenomenal and superficial, not true truths of being." (CWSA 12: 187–188)

2.

"All undesirable things are a mistranslation in the Ignorance of something that on a higher plane is or might be desirable. Inertia, tamas, is the mistranslation of the divine *śama,* rest, quietude, peace; pain is a mistranslation of Ananda, lust of love etc. It is only when the lower perversions are got rid of that the higher things in their truth can reign." (CWSA 28: 49)

3.

"Behind in our self and spirit is the All-Delight of the universal being which takes its account of the contact, a delight first in the enduring and then in the conquest of the suffering and finally in its transmutation that shall come hereafter; for pain and suffering are a perverse and contrary term of the delight of existence and they can turn into their opposite, even into the original All-Delight, Ananda." (CWSA 21: 420)

4.

"Consciousness of being and Delight of being are the first parents. Also, they are the last transcendences. Unconsciousness is only an intermediate swoon of the conscious or its obscure sleep; pain and self-extinction are only delight of being running away from itself in order to find itself elsewhere or otherwise." *Aphorisms* (CWSA 13: 202)

5.

420. "Most of all things on earth I hated pain till God hurt and tortured me; then it was revealed to me that pain is only a perverse and recalcitrant shape of excessive delight." Thoughts and Aphorisms (CWSA 12: 482)

III—Pleasure and Pain Are Equally a Degradation of Ananda

1.

"*Mother, here Sri Aurobindo has said that pain is a degradation of an original Ananda...*

Yes, but everything, everything is a degradation. He has said, pleasure also. Pleasure and pain are equally a degradation of Ananda. Besides, the capacity for balance of the human physical consciousness is very small. If you have a pleasure which you push a little too far, whatever it may be, it immediately becomes a pain—whatever it may be. And there is always a place where one no longer knows whether it is a pleasure or a pain, it can as well be this or that. But wait a bit, eat something that's too sweet and you will see the effect. At first you say that it's very good, then suddenly it becomes something which... oh! it is almost unbearable. For everything it is like that, for everything. They are very close relations, you see." (CWM 7: 148–149)

IV—Pain Came Due to the Fall of Sachchidananda into Dividing Consciousness

1.

"If all is in truth Sachchidananda, death, suffering, evil, limitation can only be the creations, positive in practical effect, negative in essence, of a distorting consciousness which has fallen from the total and unifying knowledge of itself into some error of division and partial experience. … That fall is his deviation from the full and pure acceptance of God and himself, or rather of God in himself, into a dividing consciousness which brings with it all the train of the dualities, life and death, good and evil, joy and pain, completeness and want, the fruit of a divided being. This is the fruit which Adam and Eve, Purusha and Prakriti, the soul tempted by Nature, have eaten. The redemption comes by the recovery of the universal in the individual and of the spiritual term in the physical consciousness." (CWSA 21: 56)

2.

"Existence plunging into an apparent Non-Existence, Consciousness into an apparent Inconscience, Delight of existence into a vast cosmic insensibility are the first result of the fall and, in the return from it by a struggling fragmentary experience, the rendering of Consciousness into the dual terms of truth and falsehood, knowledge and

error, of Existence into the dual terms of life and death, of Delight of existence into the dual terms of pain and pleasure are the necessary process of the labour of self-discovery. A pure experience of Truth, Knowledge, Delight, imperishable existence would here be itself a contradiction of the truth of things." (CWSA 21: 302)

3.

"With man there has begun this perpetual worrying about what is going to happen, and this worry is the principal, if not the sole cause of his torment. With this objectivising consciousness there has begun anxiety, painful imaginations, worry, torment, anticipation of future catastrophes, with the result that most men—and not the least conscious, the most conscious—live in perpetual torment. Man is too conscious to be indifferent, he is not conscious enough to know what will happen. Truly it could be said without fear of making a mistake that of all earth's creatures he is the most miserable. The human being is used to being like that because it is an atavistic state which he has inherited from his ancestors, but it is truly a miserable condition. And it is only with this spiritual capacity of rising to a higher level and replacing the animal's unconsciousness by a spiritual super-consciousness that there comes into the being not only the capacity to see the goal of existence and to foresee the culmination of the effort but also a clear-sighted trust in a

higher spiritual power to which one can surrender one's whole being, entrust oneself, give the responsibility for one's life and future and so abandon all worries." (CWM 9: 303–304)

4.

"O mortal who complainst of death and fate,
Accuse none of the harms thyself hast called;
This troubled world thou hast chosen for thy home,
Thou art thyself the author of thy pain.
Once in the immortal boundlessness of Self,
In a vast of Truth and Consciousness and Light
The soul looked out from its felicity.
It felt the Spirit's interminable bliss,
It knew itself deathless, timeless, spaceless, one,
It saw the Eternal, lived in the Infinite.
Then, curious of a shadow thrown by Truth,
It strained towards some otherness of self,
It was drawn to an unknown Face peering through night.
It sensed a negative infinity,
A void supernal whose immense excess
Imitating God and everlasting Time
Offered a ground for Nature's adverse birth
And Matter's rigid hard unconsciousness
Harbouring the brilliance of a transient soul
That lights up birth and death and ignorant life." (CWSA 34: 454)

5.

"As one drawn by the grandeur of the Void
The soul attracted leaned to the Abyss:
It longed for the adventure of Ignorance
And the marvel and surprise of the Unknown
And the endless possibility that lurked
In the womb of Chaos and in Nothing's gulf
Or looked from the unfathomed eyes of Chance.
It tired of its unchanging happiness,
It turned away from immortality:
It was drawn to hazard's call and danger's charm,
It yearned to the pathos of grief, the drama of pain,
Perdition's peril, the wounded bare escape,
The music of ruin and its glamour and crash,
The savour of pity and the gamble of love
And passion and the ambiguous face of Fate." (CWSA 34: 455)

6.

"A huge descent began, a giant fall:
For what the spirit sees, creates a truth
And what the soul imagines is made a world.
A Thought that leaped from the Timeless can become,
Indicator of cosmic consequence
And the itinerary of the gods,
A cyclic movement in eternal Time.
Thus came, born from a blind tremendous choice,

This great perplexed and discontented world,
This haunt of Ignorance, this home of Pain:
There are pitched desire's tents, grief's headquarters.
A vast disguise conceals the Eternal's bliss'." (CWSA 34: 456)

V—Pain and Pleasure Govern the Human Being's Primary Nature

1.

But the spirit of existence is not merely a legislator and judge concerned to maintain a standard of legal justice, to dole out deterrents and sanctions, rewards and penalties, ferocious pains of hell, indulgent joys of paradise. He is the Divine in the world, the Master of a spiritual evolution and the growing godhead in humanity. That godhead grows however slowly beyond the dependence on the sanctions of pleasure and pain. Pain and pleasure govern our primary being and in that primary scale pain is Nature's advertisement of things we should avoid, pleasure her lure to things she would tempt us to pursue. These devices are first empirical tests for limited objects; but as I grow, I pass beyond their narrower uses. I have continually to disregard Nature's original warnings and lures in order to get to a higher nature. I have to develop a nobler spiritual law of Karma. (CWSA 13: 373–374)

2.

"This aspiration [for search for God, for perfection, for freedom, for an absolute Truth and Bliss, for immortality] is in contradiction with his present existence and normal experience of himself which is that of a mortal being full of imperfections, ego-ridden, largely animal, subject to

transitory joys and much pain and suffering, bound by mechanical necessity. But the direct contradiction between what he is and what he seeks to be need not be a final argument against the validity of his aspiration." (CWSA 13: 501)

3.

"[Man] Finding himself in a world which is apparently a chaos of battling powers, a clash of vast and obscure forces, a life which subsists only by constant change and death, menaced from every side by pain, suffering, evil and destruction, he has to see the omnipresent Deity in it all and conscious that of this enigma there must be a solution and beyond this Ignorance in which he dwells a Knowledge that reconciles, he has to take his stand upon this faith, 'Though Thou slay me, yet will I trust in Thee'." (CWSA 19: 47–48)

4.

"That which strikes us most saliently & leaps on us fiercely at every turn, is grief & pain, not delight; that which besieges our eyes always & everywhere is not conscious awareness, but the inertia or the brute movement of unconscious Matter." (CWSA 12: 85–86)

5.

"Our evolution in the Ignorance with its chequered joy and pain of self-discovery and world discovery, its half

fulfilments, its constant finding and missing, is only our first state. It must lead inevitably towards an evolution in the Knowledge, a self-finding and self-unfolding of the Spirit, a self-revelation of the Divinity in things in that true power of itself in Nature which is to us still a Supernature." (CWSA 22: 1107)

6.

"The whole world knows, spiritual thinker and materialist alike, that this world for the created or naturally evolved being in the ignorance or the inconscience of Nature is neither a bed of roses nor a path of joyous Light. It is a difficult journey, a battle and struggle, an often painful and chequered growth, a life besieged by obscurity, falsehood and suffering. It has its mental, vital, physical joys and pleasures, but these bring only a transient taste—which yet the vital self is unwilling to forego—and they end in distaste, fatigue or disillusionment." (CWSA 28: 355)

7.

"As long as we live in the ignorant seeming, we are the ego and are subject to the modes of Nature. Enslaved to appearances, bound to the dualities, tossed between good and evil, sin and virtue, grief and joy, pain and pleasure, good fortune and ill fortune, success and failure, we follow helplessly the iron or gilt and iron round of the wheel of Maya." (CWSA 23: 95)

8.

"The sign of the immersion of the embodied soul in Prakriti is the limitation of consciousness to the ego. … The soul circles in an unending round of Nature's alluring and distressing opposites, success and failure, good fortune and ill fortune, good and evil, sin and virtue, joy and grief, pain and pleasure." (CWSA 23: 100)

9.

"Alone of the three powers Life or at least a certain predominant Will-in-Life has the appearance of something impure, accursed or fallen in its very essence. … A principle of dark and dull inertia is at its [life-forces] base; all are tied down by the body and its needs and desires to a trivial mind, petty desires and emotions, an insignificant repetition of small worthless functionings, needs, cares, occupations, pains, pleasures that lead to nothing beyond themselves and bear the stamp of an ignorance that knows not its own why and whither. This physical mind of inertia believes in no divinity other than its own small earth-gods; it aspires perhaps to a greater comfort, order, pleasure, but asks for no uplifting and no spiritual deliverance." (CWSA 23: 170–171)

10.

"But in practice we find that we are not Ish, but anish, not master, but slave; not jnata & anumanta, but ajna, not

knowing & controlling, but ignorant, clouded, struggling for knowledge & mastery; not an immortal enjoyer in delight, but victim of sorrow, death & limitation. Limited, we struggle to enlarge ourselves & our scope; unpossessed of our desire, we demand & we strive; unattaining, reacted upon by hostile forces, we are full of sorrow & racked by pain." (CWSA 17: 379—380)

11.

"As for the question of what is necessary for progress, in an evolving world everything is necessarily a help to progress; but individual progress extends over a considerable number of lives and through innumerable experiences. It cannot be judged on the basis of a single life between birth and death. On the whole, it is certain that the experience of a life of failure and defeat is just as useful to the soul's growth as the experience of a life of success and victory; even more so, no doubt, than the experience of an uneventful life, as human existence usually is, in which success and failure, satisfaction and disappointment, pleasure and pain mingle and follow one another—a life that seems 'natural' and does not require any great effort." (CWM 10: 56–57)

12.

"*Sweet Mother,*

What is meant by the 'silence of the physical consciousness' and how can one remain in this silence?

The physical consciousness is not only the consciousness of our body, but of all that surrounds us as well—all that we perceive with our senses. It is a sort of apparatus for recording and transmission which is open to all the contacts and shocks coming from outside and responds to them by reactions of pleasure and pain which welcome or repel. This makes in our outer being a constant activity and noise that we are only partially aware of, because we are so accustomed to them.

But if through meditation or concentration we turn inward or upward, we can bring down into ourselves or raise up from the depths calm, quiet, peace and finally silence. It is a concrete, positive silence (not the negative silence of the absence of noise), immutable so long as it remains, a silence one can experience even in the outer tumult of a hurricane or battlefield. This silence is synonymous with peace and it is all-powerful; it is the perfectly effective remedy for the fatigue, tension and exhaustion arising from that internal over-activity and noise which generally escape our control and cease neither by day nor night." (CWM 16: 229)

13.

"Once pain is in the world and a main part of its working it cannot be got rid of arbitrarily by ignoring it or by a simple surgical operation of cutting out its source. It is the mind with its summary conclusions that thinks the complex knot

of things can be dealt with by a simple cut—in fact it is not so." (CWSA 35: 651)

14.

"When Christ came upon earth, he brought a message of brotherhood, love and peace. But he had to die in pain, on the cross, so that his message might be heard. For men cherish suffering and hatred and want their God to suffer with them. They wanted this when Christ came and, in spite of his teaching and sacrifice, they still want it; and they are so attached to their pain that, symbolically, Christ is still bound to his cross, suffering perpetually for the salvation of men." (CWM 10: 59)

VI—Why the Ordinary Man Has Pleasure and Pain, Joy and Grief

1.

"Again, the sign of the divine worker is that which is central to the divine consciousness itself, a perfect inner joy and peace which depends upon nothing in the world for its source or its continuance; it is innate, it is the very stuff of the soul's consciousness, it is the very nature of divine being. The ordinary man depends upon outward things for his happiness; therefore he has desire; therefore he has anger and passion, pleasure and pain, joy and grief; therefore he measures all things in the balance of good fortune and evil fortune. None of these things can affect the divine soul; it is ever satisfied without any kind of dependence, *nityatripto nirâçrayah* ; for its delight, its divine ease, its happiness, its glad light are eternal within, ingrained in itself, *âtmaratih, antahsukho'ntarâmas tathântarjyotir era cha.* What joy it takes in outward things is not for their sake, not for things which it seeks in them and can miss, but for the self in them, for their expression of the Divine, for that which is eternal in them and which it cannot miss." (CWSA 19: 184)

2.

"If our sensemind, emotional mind, thought-mind could act free from the intrusions and importations of the life-

energy, if that energy could be made to obey their right action instead of imposing its own yoke on our existence, all human problems would move harmoniously to their right solution. The proper function of the life-energy is to do what it is bidden by the divine principle in us, to reach to and enjoy what is given to it by that indwelling Divine and not to desire at all. The proper function of the sense-mind is to lie open passively, luminously to the contacts of Life and transmit their sensations and the *rasa* or right taste and principle of delight in them to the higher function; but interfered with by the attractions and repulsions, the acceptances and refusals, the satisfactions and dissatisfactions, the capacities and incapacities of the life-energy in the body it is, to begin with, limited in its scope and, secondly, forced in these limits to associate itself with all these discords of the life in Matter. It becomes an instrument for pleasure and pain instead of for delight of existence." (CWSA 23: 351)

3.

"But man as the individual self, owing to his ignorant self-identification with the work and the becoming, as if that were all his soul and not a power of his soul, a power proceeding from it, is bewildered by the ego-sense. He thinks that it is he and others who are doing all; he does not see that Nature is doing all and that he is misrepresenting and disfiguring her works to himself by

ignorance and attachment. He is enslaved by the gunas, now hampered in the dull case of tamas, now blown by the strong winds of rajas, now limited by the partial lights of sattwa, not distinguishing himself at all from the nature-mind which alone is thus modified by the gunas. He is therefore mastered by pain and pleasure, happiness and grief, desire and passion, attachment and disgust: he has no freedom." (CWSA 19: 231)

4.

"What we call misery, grief, pain, absence of delight is again merely a surface wave of the delight of existence which takes on to our mental experience these apparently opposite tints because of a certain trick of false reception in our divided being—which is not our existence at all but only a fragmentary formulation or discoloured spray of conscious-force tossed up by the infinite sea of our self-existence. In order to realise this we have to get away from our absorption in these surface habits, these petty tricks of our mental being,—and when we do get behind and away from them it is surprising how superficial they are, what ridiculously weak and little-penetrating pin-pricks they prove to be,—and we have to realise true existence, and true consciousness, and true experience of existence and consciousness, Sat, Chit and Ananda." (CWSA 23: 387)

5.

"His delight of being depends on the relations of this imperfect consciousness with its environment based upon physical sensations and the sense-mind, in other words on a limited mind trying to lay hold on a world external and foreign to it by means of a limited body, limited vital force, limited organs. Therefore its power for possession is limited, its force for delight is limited, and every touch of the world which exceeds its force, which that force cannot bear, cannot seize on, cannot assimilate and possess must turn to something else than delight, to pain, discomfort or grief. Or else it must be met by non-reception, insensibility, or, if received, put away by indifference. Moreover such delight of being as it possesses, is not possessed naturally and eternally like the self-delight of Sachchidananda, but by experience and acquisition in Time, and can therefore only be maintained and prolonged by repetition of experience and is in its nature precarious and transient." (CWSA 23: 450–451)

6.

"Knowledge, Force and Delight are the three powers of the divine Life; thought and its formations, will and its works, love and its harmonisings are the corresponding human activities which have to be exalted to the divine level. The dualities of truth and falsehood, light and darkness, conceptional right and wrong are the confusions of

knowledge born of egoistic division; the dualities of egoistic love and hatred, joy and grief, pleasure and pain are the confusions of Love, perversities of Ananda; the dualities of strength and weakness, sin and virtue, action and inaction are the confusions of will, dissipators of the divine Force. And all these confusions arise and even become necessary modes of our action because the triune powers of the divine Life are divorced from each other, Knowledge from Strength, Love from both, by the Ignorance which divides." (CWSA 15: 279)

7.

"Substance of being, light of consciousness, active force and possessive delight are the constituent principles of existence; but their combination in us may be either limited, divided, hurt, broken and obscure or infinite, enlightened, vast, whole and unhurt. Limited and divided being is ignorance; it is darkness and weakness, it is grief and pain; in the Vast, in the integral, in the infinite we must seek for the desirable riches of substance, light, force and joy. Limitation is mortality; immortality comes to us as an accomplished self-possession in the infinite and the power to live and move in firm vastnesses." (CWSA 15: 375)

8.

"A spirit of her self and aim unsure,
Tired soon of too much joy and happiness,

She needs the spur of pleasure and of pain
And the native taste of suffering and unrest:
She strains for an end that never can she win." (CWSA 33: 118)

9.

"Ah, yes, ah, yes! Ah, it is very difficult to be sincere.... That is why the blows multiply and sometimes become terrible, because that's the only thing which breaks your stupidity. This is the justification of calamities. Only when you are in an acutely painful situation and indeed before something that affects you deeply, then that makes the stupidity melt away a little. But as you say, even when there is something that melts, there is still a little something which remains inside. And that is why it lasts so long…

How many blows are needed in life for one to know to the very depths that one is *nothing*, that one can do *nothing*, that one *does not exist*, that one is *nothing*, that there is no entity without the divine Consciousness and the Grace. From the moment one knows it, it is over; all the difficulties have gone. When one knows it integrally and there is nothing which resists... but till that moment... And it takes very long." (CWM 6: 323–324)

VII—Pain and Pleasure Are the Result of Association and Their Seat Is in the Mind

1.

"It is not the body which determines the operations of the mind, it is the mind which determines the laws of the body. It is the ordinary law of the body that if it is struck, pierced or roughly pressed it feels pain. This law is created by the mind which associates pain with these contacts, and if the mind changes its *dharma* and is able to associate with these contacts not pain but insensibility or pleasure, then they will bring about those results of insensibility or pleasure and no other. The pain and pleasure are not the result of the contact, neither is their seat in the body; they are the result of association and their seat is in the mind. Vinegar is sour, sugar sweet, but to the hypnotised mind vinegar can be sweet, sugar sour. The sourness or sweetness is not in the vinegar or sugar, but in the mind. The heart also is the subject of the mind. My emotions are like my physical feelings, the result of association, and my character is the result of accumulated past experiences with their resultant associations and reactions crystallising into habits of mind and heart summed up in the word, character. These things like all the rest that are made of the stuff of associations are not permanent or binding but fluid and mutable, *anitāḥ sarvasaṁskāraāḥ*. If my friend blames me, I am grieved; that is an association and not

binding. The grief is not the result of the blame but of an association in the mind. I can change the association so far that blame will cause me no grief, praise no elation. I can entirely stop the reactions of joy and grief by the same force that created them. They are habits of the mind, nothing more. In the same way though with more difficulty I can stop the reactions of physical pain and pleasure so that nothing will hurt my body. If I am a coward today, I can be a hero tomorrow. The cowardice was merely the habit of associating certain things with pain and grief and of shrinking from the pain and grief; this shrinking and the physical sensations in the vital or nervous man which accompany it are called fear, and they can be dismissed by the action of the mind which created them." (CWSA 13: 24–25)

2.

"We have seen, when we considered the Delight of Existence in its relations to the world, that there is no absoluteness or essential validity in our standards of pleasure and pain and indifference, that they are entirely determined by the subjectivity of the receiving consciousness and that the degree of either pleasure and pain can be heightened to a maximum or depressed to a minimum or even effaced entirely in its apparent nature. Pleasure can become pain or pain pleasure because in their secret reality they are the same thing differently

reproduced in the sensations and emotions. Indifference is either the inattention of the surface desire-soul in its mind, sensations, emotions and cravings to the *rasa* of things, or its incapacity to receive and respond to it, or its refusal to give any surface response or, again, its driving and crushing down of the pleasure or the pain by the will into the neutral tint of unacceptance. In all these cases what happens is that either there is a positive refusal or a negative unreadiness or incapacity to render or in any way represent positively on the surface something that is yet subliminally active." (CWSA 21: 235–236)

3.

137. "There is no iron or ineffugable law that a given contact shall create pain or pleasure; it is the way the soul meets the rush or pressure of Brahman upon the members from outside them that determines either reaction." Thoughts and Aphorisms (CWSA 12: 439)

4.

"To things, persons, happenings, ideas, workings, whatever presents itself to the mind, there are always these three kinds of reaction [impacts that give joy, pleasure; impacts that give grief, pain and impacts that are neutral]. At the same time, in spite of their generality, there is nothing absolute about them; they form a scheme for a habitual scale which is not precisely the same for all

or even for the same mind at different times or in different conditions. The same impact may arouse in it at one time and another the pleasurable or positive, the adverse or negative or the indifferent or neutral reactions." (CWSA 24: 710–711)

5.

138. "The force of soul in thee meeting the same force from outside cannot harmonise the measures of the contact in values of mind-experience & body-experience, therefore thou hast pain, grief or uneasiness. If thou canst learn to adjust the replies of the force in thyself to the questions of world-force, thou shalt find pain becoming pleasurable or turning into pure delightfulness. Right relation is the condition of blissfulness, ritam the key of ananda." Thoughts and Aphorisms (CWSA 12: 439)

6.

421. There are four stages in the pain God gives to us; when it is only pain; when it is pain that causes pleasure; when it is pain that is pleasure; and when it is purely a fiercer form of delight." Thoughts and Aphorisms (CWSA 12: 482)

7.

422. "Even when one has climbed up into those levels of bliss where pain vanishes, it still survives disguised as

intolerable ecstasy.” Thoughts and Aphorisms (CWSA 12: 482)

VIII—If Pleasure Is the Object of Life, Then We Make Pain the Condition of Life

1.

"If we make pleasure the object of life, then we also make pain the condition of life. The two go together and are inseparable companions. You cannot have one for your bed-fellow without making a life companion of the other. They are husband and wife and, though perpetually quarrelling, will not hear of divorce.

But neither is pain the necessary condition of life, as the Buddhists say, nor is extinction of sensation the condition of bliss." (CWSA 12: 205)

2.

"Man is in love with pleasure; therefore he must undergo the yoke of grief and pain. For unmixed delight is only for the free and passionless soul; but that which pursues after pleasure in man is a suffering and straining energy." Aphorisms (CWSA 13: 204)

3.

"To seek for pleasure is to ask for pain, for they are the obverse and reverse of the same thing. (CWM 15: 257)

4.

"The surface nature does not enjoy [*groaning and weeping*]—but something within enjoys the *līlā* of 'laughter

and tears', joy and grief, pleasure and pain, in a word the play of the ignorance. In some people this comes up to a certain extent on the surface. Many, if you propose to them the removal of suffering from life, look askance at you and feel that it would be terribly boring to have nothing but joy and Ananda and peace—many even have said it." (CWSA 31: 178–179)

5.

"The human vital tends rather to reject a happiness untainted by sorrow and to find it a monotonous, boring condition. Even if it accepts it, after a time it kicks over the traces and goes to some new painful or risky adventure." (CWSA 35: 167)

IX—Fragmentation of Delight in the Ego Becomes Pain and Sorrow

1.

"There is no happiness in smallness of the being, says the Scripture, it is with the large being that happiness comes. The ego is by its nature a smallness of being; it brings contraction of the consciousness and with the contraction limitation of knowledge, disabling ignorance,—confinement and a diminution of power and by that diminution incapacity and weakness,—scission of oneness and by that scission disharmony and failure of sympathy and love and understanding,—inhibition or fragmentation of delight of being and by that fragmentation pain and sorrow. To recover what is lost we must break out of the walls of ego. The ego must either disappear in impersonality or fuse into a larger I: it must fuse into the wider cosmic 'I' which comprehends all these smaller selves or the transcendent of which even the cosmic self is a diminished image." (CWSA 23: 357–358)

2.

"As individual egos we dwell in the Ignorance and judge everything by a broken, partial and personal standard of knowledge; we experience everything according to the capacity of a limited consciousness and force and are therefore unable to give a divine response or set the true

value upon any part of cosmic experience. We experience limitation, weakness, incapacity, grief, pain, struggle and its contradictory emotions and we accept these things and their opposites as opposites in an eternal duality and cannot reconcile them in the eternity of an absolute good and happiness. We live by fragments of experience and judge by our fragmentary values each thing and the whole. When we try to arrive at absolute values we only promote some partial view of things to do duty for a totality in the divine workings; we then make believe that our fractions are integers and try to thrust our one-sided view-points into the catholicity of the all-vision of the Divine." (CWSA 23: 413)

3.

"It is this little ego, this fragmented consciousness, this concealed soul-spark on which is imposed the task of meeting and striving with the forces of the universe, entering into contact with all that seems to it not itself, increasing under the pressure of inner and outer Nature till it can become one with all existence. The limitation of its consciousness, unable to dominate or assimilate the contacts of the universal Energy, is the cause of all its suffering, pain and sorrow. Its limited power of consciousness formulated in an ignorant will unable to grasp or follow the right law of its life and action is the cause of all its error, wrongdoing and evil. There is no other

true cause; for all apparent causes are themselves circumstance and result of this original sin of the being. Only when it rises and widens out of this limited separative consciousness into the oneness of the liberated Spirit, can it escape from these results of its growth out of the Inconscience." (CWSA 25: 169–170)

4.

"But by the very definition of the ego its capacity is limited. ...

...

It can only accept and harmonise itself with a certain number of its experiences, precisely because these are the only ones it can understand sufficiently to assimilate. This is its joy; the rest is sorrow or indifference.

It is only capable of harmonising with the force in its body, nerves and mind a certain number of impacts of alien forces. In these it takes pleasure. The rest it receives with insensibility or pain." Isha Upanishad (CWSA 17: 56–57)

5.

"But the moment the individual soul leans away from the universal and transcendent truth of its being, leans towards ego, tries to make this will a thing of its own, a separate personal energy, that will changes its character: it becomes an effort, a straining, a heat of force which may have its fiery joys of effectuation and of possession, but has also its afflicting recoils and pain of labour. It is this that turns in

each instrument into an intellectual, emotional, dynamic, sensational or vital will of desire, wish, craving." (CWSA 24: 676)

X—Pain Is the Result of Ignorance

1.

"Pain and suffering are necessary results of the Ignorance in which we live; ..." (CWSA 31: 204)

2.

"But since it is from the Ignorance that we proceed to the Knowledge, we have had first to discover the secret nature and full extent of the Ignorance. If we look at this Ignorance in which ordinarily we live by the very circumstance of our separative existence in a material, in a spatial and temporal universe, we see that on its obscurer side it reduces itself, from whatever direction we look at or approach it, into the fact of a many-sided self-ignorance. We are ignorant of the Absolute which is the source of all being and becoming; … We are ignorant of the spaceless, timeless, immobile and immutable Self; … We are ignorant of our universal self, the cosmic existence, the cosmic consciousness, our infinite unity with all being and becoming; we take our limited egoistic mentality, vitality, corporeality for our true self and regard everything other than that as not-self,—that is the third, the egoistic ignorance. We are ignorant of our eternal becoming in Time; we take this little life in a small span of Time, in a petty field of Space, for our beginning, our middle and our end, … Even within this brief temporal becoming we are

ignorant of our large and complex being, of that in us which is superconscient, subconscient, intraconscient, circumconscient to our surface becoming; we take that surface becoming with its small selection of overtly mentalised experiences for our whole existence, … We are ignorant of the true constitution of our becoming; we take the mind or life or body or any two of these or all three for our true principle or the whole account of what we are, … As a result of all these ignorances, we miss the true knowledge, government and enjoyment of our life in the world; we are ignorant in our thought, will, sensations, actions, return wrong or imperfect responses at every point to the questionings of the world, wander in a maze of errors and desires, strivings and failures, pain and pleasure, sin and stumbling, follow a crooked road, grope blindly for a changing goal,—that is the seventh, the practical ignorance." (CWSA 22: 680–681)

3.

"Man's life is made up of the light and the darkness, the gains and losses, the difficulties and dangers, the pleasures and pains of the Ignorance, a play of colours moving on a soil of the general neutrality of Matter which has as its basis the nescience and insensibility of the Inconscient." (CWSA 22: 1106)

4.

"This world is a world of Ignorance and by Ignorance a world of strife, seeking, error and suffering. We start by knowing nothing and have to learn everything; because our knowledge is a mixture of truth and falsehood and our will constantly mistaken when not perverted, we stumble at every step and pay the price of experience in pain and grief and sorrow. It would seem as if nothing could save us but thought and knowledge translated into right will and action and it is that for which man by his intellect is seeking and yet by his intellect he has never found it and it looks as if by his intellect he would never find it. Then there is probably something else beyond the intellect which alone can give him the Light—something beyond his mind and greater than himself—a Grace that intervenes, the law of a supernormal Light and Will, a help, an opening from above." (CWSA 29: 167–168)

5.

"The Ignorance which is the characteristic of our mind and life is the result of this origin in the Inconscience. Moreover, in the evolution out of inconscient existence there rise up naturally powers and beings which are interested in the maintenance of all negations of the Divine, error and unconsciousness, pain, suffering, obscurity, death, weakness, illness, disharmony, evil. Hence the perversion of the manifestation here, its inability

to reveal the true essence of the Divine. Yet in the very base of this evolution all that is divine is there involved and pressing to evolve, Light, Consciousness, Power, Perfection, Beauty, Love. For in the Inconscient itself and behind the perversions of the Ignorance Divine Consciousness lies concealed and works and must more and more appear, throwing off in the end its disguises. That is why it is said that the world is called to express the Divine." (CWSA 28: 277)

6.

"The Omniscient has plunged itself into Nescience, the All-Conscious into Inconscience, the All-Wise into perpetual Ignorance. The Omnipotent has formulated itself in a vast cosmic self-driven Inertia that by disintegration creates; the Infinite is self-expressed here in a boundless fragmentation; the All-Blissful has put on a huge insensibility out of which it struggles by pain and hunger and desire and sorrow. Elsewhere the Divine is; here in physical life, in this obscure material world, it would seem almost as if the Divine is not but is only becoming, … This gradual becoming of the Divine out of its own phenomenal opposites is the meaning and purpose of the terrestrial evolution." (CWSA 12: 165–166)

7.

"A god has veiled himself in the earth & mire and beauty and perfection lie unevolved in masses of ordure. This is the play of God with His substance in Matter.

…

An ignorance in which is packed up all knowledge, a mighty inertia in which all cosmic force strives helplessly, an insensibility which conceals the pain and strain of all ecstasy present, but held back, this is the outer face of material Nature and our starting point." (CWSA 12: 260)

8.

"There is behind all the vital nature in man his true vital being concealed and immobile which is quite different from the surface vital nature. The surface vital is narrow, ignorant, limited, full of obscure desires, passions, cravings, revolts, pleasures and pains, transient joys and griefs, exultations and depressions. The true vital being on the contrary is wide, vast, calm, strong, without limitations, firm and immovable, capable of all power, all knowledge, all Ananda. It is moreover without ego, for it knows itself to be a projection and instrument of the Divine; it is the divine Warrior, pure and perfect; in it is an instrumental Force for all divine realisations." (CWSA 28: 185)

9.

"The underlying reason for this is that this little mind, vital and body which we call ourselves is only a surface

movement and not our 'self' at all. It is an external bit of personality put forward for one brief life and for the play of the Ignorance. It is equipped with an ignorant mind stumbling about in search of fragments of truth, an ignorant vital rushing about in search of fragments of pleasure, an obscure and mostly subconscious physical receiving the impacts of things and suffering rather than possessing a resultant pain or pleasure. All that is accepted until the mind gets disgusted and starts looking about for the real Truth of itself and things, the vital gets disgusted and begins wondering whether there is not such a thing as real bliss and the physical gets tired and wants liberation from itself and its pains and pleasures. Then it is possible for this little ignorant bit of surface personality to get back to its real Self and with it to these greater things—or else to extinction of itself, Nirvana.

The real Self is not anywhere on the surface but deep within and above." (CWSA 30: 324–325)

10.

"Whatever fulfilment one may feel in pain or in doubt belongs to the Ignorance; the real fulfilment is in the divine joy and the divine Truth and its certitude and it is that for which the Yogin strives." (CWSA 31: 204)

11.

"The Power can do everything, change everything and will do that but it can do it perfectly and easily and permanently

only when your own will mental, vital and physical has been put on the side of the Truth. If you side with the vital ignorance and want to fight against your own spiritual change, it means a painful and difficult struggle before the work is done. That is why I insist on quietude at the very least and patient confidence with it, as far as you can—so that there may be a quiet and steady progress, not a painful and tormented movement full of relapse and struggle." (CWSA 31: 721)

12.

"The knot of this duality is an ignorance which is unable to seize on the spiritual truth of things and concentrates on the imperfect appearances, but meets them not with a mastery of their inner truth, but with a strife and a shifting balance of attraction and repulsion, capacity and incapacity, liking and disliking, pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, acceptance and repugnance; all life is represented to us as a tangle of these things, of the pleasant and the unpleasant, the beautiful and the unbeautiful, truth and falsehood, fortune and misfortune, success and failure, good and evil, the inextricable double web of Nature." (CWSA 24: 689)

13.

"When we are obscure and revolt against the Truth and the Law, our progress seems to be a stumbling from

ignorance to ignorance and is full of pain and disturbance. By constant submission to the Truth, surrenderings, *namobhiḥ*, we create in ourselves that image of the divine Will which is on the contrary full of peace, because it is assured of the Truth and the Law. Equality of soul created by the surrender to the universal Wisdom gives us a supreme peace and calm." (CWSA 15: 282)

14.

"…our aim must be to grow into our true being, our being of Spirit, the being of the supreme and universal Existence, Consciousness, Delight, Sachchidananda.

All our existence depends on that Existence, it is that which is evolving in us; we are a being of that Existence, a state of consciousness of that Consciousness, an energy of that conscious Energy, a will-to-delight of being, delight of consciousness, delight of energy born of that Delight: this is the root principle of our existence. But our surface formulation of these things is not that, it is a mistranslation into the terms of the Ignorance. Our I is not that spiritual being which can look on the Divine Existence and say, 'That am I'; our mentality is not that spiritual consciousness; our will is not that force of consciousness; our pain and pleasure, even our highest joys and ecstasies are not that delight of being. On the surface we are still an ego figuring self, an ignorance turning into knowledge, a will laboring towards true force, a desire seeking for the delight of

existence.To become ourselves by exceeding ourselves, … is the difficult and dangerous necessity, … To exceed ego and be our true self, to be aware of our real being, to possess it, to possess a real delight of being, is therefore the ultimate meaning of our life here; it is the concealed sense of our individual and terrestrial existence." (CWSA 22: 712–713)

15.

"The Yoga ... its aim is to work out the will of the Divine in the world, to effect a spiritual transformation and to bring down a divine nature and a divine life into the mental, vital and physical nature and life of humanity. Its object is not personal Mukti, although Mukti is a necessary condition of the yoga, but the liberation and transformation of the human being. It is not personal Ananda, but the bringing down of the divine Ananda—Christ's kingdom of heaven, our Satyayuga—upon the earth. Of *mokṣa* we have no personal need; for the soul is *nityamukta* and bondage is an illusion. We play at being bound, we are not really bound. We can be free when God wills; for he, our supreme Self, is the master of the game, and without his grace and permission no soul can leave the game. It is often God's will in us to take through the mind the *bhoga* of ignorance, of the dualities, of joy and grief, of pleasure and pain, of virtue and sin, of enjoyment and renunciation: for long ages, in many countries, he never even thinks of the yoga

but plays out this play century after century without wearying of it. There is nothing evil in this, nothing which we need condemn or from which we need shrink,—it is God's play. The wise man is he who recognises this truth and knowing his freedom, yet plays out God's play, waiting for his command to change the methods of the game." (CWSA 13: 71)

16.

480. "When I suffer from pain or grief or mischance, I say 'So, my old Playfellow, thou hast taken again to bullying me,' and I sit down to possess the pleasure of the pain, the joy of the grief, the good fortune of the mischance; then He sees He is found out and takes His ghosts & bugbears away from me." Thoughts and Aphorisms (CWSA 12: 490)

17.

"To turn towards Thee, unite with Thee, live in Thee and for Thee, is supreme happiness, unmixed joy, immutable peace; it is to breathe infinity, to soar in eternity, no longer feel one's limits, escape from time and space. Why do men flee from these boons as though they feared them? What a strange thing is ignorance, that source of all suffering! How miserable that obscurity which keeps men away from the very thing which would bring them happiness and subjects them to this painful school of ordinary existence

fashioned entirely from struggle and suffering!" (CWM 1: 22)

18.

"Where Ignorance is, there suffering too must come;
Thy grief is a cry of darkness to the Light;
Pain was the first-born of the Inconscience
Which was thy body's dumb original base;
Already slept there pain's subconscient shape:
A shadow in a shadowy tenebrous womb,
Till life shall move, it waits to wake and be.
In one caul with joy came forth the dreadful Power.
In life's breast it was born hiding its twin;
But pain came first, then only joy could be.
Pain ploughed the first hard ground of the world-drowse.
By pain a spirit started from the clod,
By pain Life stirred in the subliminal deep." (CWSA 34: 443)

19.

"He loves the Ignorance fathering his pain." (CWSA 34: 371)

20.

"A secret soul behind supporting all
Is master and witness of our ignorant life,
Admits the Person's look and Nature's role.
But once the hidden doors are flung apart
Then the veiled king steps out in Nature's front;

A Light comes down into the Ignorance,
Its heavy painful knot loosens its grasp:
The mind becomes a mastered instrument
And life a hue and figure of the soul.” (CWSA 34: 530)

XI—Pain Is the Result of Limitation

1.

"Pain is, properly considered, the result of limitation. When the desires and impulses are limited in their satisfaction or the matter, physical or mental, on which they act is checked, pressed inward, divided or pulled apart by something alien to itself, then only can pain arise. Where there is no limitation, there can be no pain. The Bliss of Brahman is therefore absolute in its nature." (CWSA 18: 370)

2.

"But when we strain beyond the normal circle of our energies,—unless we have sought refuge in God first,—then, after the first fervent joy of struggle and partial success, our instruments begin to fail us, the pleasure we are seeking loses itself or turns into pain, pain of effort, pain of longing, pain of disappointment, pain of incapacity. We advance by suffering, & water the tree of our growth with our blood & tears. All this pain would be unnecessary, the journey as well as the goal would be Ananda, not suffering but delight, if the ego-sense had not taken possession of our heart & reason. We seek our infinity not only through the finite, but by insisting on the conditions of the finite & exaggerating them. Physical, vital & mental man, acting & striving under these conditions, must always

be limited in his realisation and in his best satisfactions never entirely or permanently satisfied." Isha Upanishad (CWSA 17: 473–474)

3.

"It will be said that the escape from pleasure as well as pain is after all the common goal of Buddhism & Vedanta. True, escape from limited pleasure which involves pain, escape from pain which is nothing but the limitation of pleasure. Both really seek absolute absence of limitation which is not a negative condition, but a positive, infinity and its unspeakable, unmixed bliss; their escape from individuality does not lead them into nothingness, but into infinite existence, their escape from sensation does not purpose the annihilation of sentience but pure absolute consciousness as its goal." (CWSA 18: 393)

4.

"As to suffering, … is evidently a consequence of the limitation of consciousness, the restriction of force which prevents us from mastering or assimilating the touch of what is to us other-force: the result of this incapacity and disharmony is that the delight of the touch cannot be seized and it affects our sense with a reaction of discomfort or pain, a defect or excess, a discord resultant in inner or outer injury, born of division between our power of being and the power of being that meets us." (CWSA 21: 420)

5.

"… fundamentally, all pain and suffering are the result of an insufficient consciousness-force in the surface being which makes it unable to deal rightly with self and Nature or unable to assimilate and to harmonise itself with the contacts of the universal Energy; they would not exist if in us there were an integral presence of the luminous Consciousness and the divine Force of an integral Being." (CWSA 21: 622)

XII—Pain, the Consequence of Rajasic Works

1.

"Ignorance is the result of tamasic action, pain the consequence of rajasic works, pain of reaction, disappointment, dissatisfaction or transience, and therefore in attachment to the fruits of this kind of activity attended as they are with these undesirable accompaniments there is no profit. But of works rightly done the fruit is pure and sattwic, the inner result is knowledge and happiness. Yet attachment even to these pleasurable things must be entirely abandoned, first, because in the mind they are limited and limiting forms and, secondly, because, since sattwa is constantly entangled with and besieged by rajas and tamas which may at any moment overcome it, there is a perpetual insecurity in their tenure." (CWSA 19: 432)

2.

"This is the mode of rajas, the way of passion and action and the thirst of desire. Struggle and change and new creation, victory and defeat and joy and suffering and hope and disappointment are its children and build the many-coloured house of life in which it takes its pleasure. But its knowledge is an imperfect or a false knowledge and brings with it ignorant effort, error, a constant misadjustment, pain of attachment, disappointed desire, grief of loss and

failure. The gift of rajas is kinetic force, energy, activity, the power that creates and acts and can overcome; but it moves in the wrong lights or the half-lights of the Ignorance and it is perverted by the touch of the Asura, Rakshasa and Pishacha." (CWSA 23: 233–234)

3.

"The vital energy by itself leads nowhere, runs in chequered, often painful and ruinous circles, takes even to the precipice, because it has no right guidance; it must be connected with the dynamic power of the higher consciousness and with the Divine Force acting through it for a great and luminous purpose." (CWSA 31: 117)

XIII—Desire Is the Cause of Pain

1.
"Desire, the cause of our pain, has itself its cause or rather its secret essence in the ego-sense transferred from the discriminating mind to the responsive heart." Isha Upanishad (CWSA 17: 472)

2.
"While desire is our counsellor, pain and suffering must always be our heritage." Isha Upanishad (CWSA 17: 472)

3.
"For, first, life as it is is a movement of desire and it has built in us as its centre a desire-soul which refers to itself all the motions of life and puts in them its own troubled hue and pain of an ignorant, half-lit, baffled endeavour: for a divine living, desire must be abolished and replaced by a purer and firmer motive power, the tormented soul of desire dissolved and in its stead there must emerge the calm, strength, happiness of a true vital being now concealed within us." (CWSA 23: 176–177)

4.
"To finish with desire altogether by attacking & destroying its seed of ego-sense in the heart, is our only escape from

present pain and our only safety from renewed suffering." (CWSA 17: 475)

5.

"*Man is Anandamaya Purusha not yet or always manifested, but in course of manifestation. At present he is manomaya, tied to mind and living by desire; he is besieged therefore by pain and limitation, from which, so long as he remains on the mental level, he can only escape entirely by Sannyasa. But if he has the will, he can even in this life and body manifest his true anandamaya self and become in Nature all-possessing & in life all-blissful*." (CWSA 17: 478)

6.

"*Man desires because he is infinite Self seated in the ego-ridden heart. The self is one in being and its nature is bliss; therefore the heart confined by ego seeks to reach out to the unity & to realise the bliss but it seeks, mistakenly, through physical and emotional enjoyment in the jagat. Man desires illimitably because he is universal and illimitable; he cannot satisfy his desires illimitably because egoistic self-division persuades him to limit himself to his individual mind, life and body. Man desires with pain & weeping because by creating habitual wants, conventional dualistic standards of delight and false values of grief and joy, pleasure and pain he has bound himself not to*

recognise infinite Ananda in the world, not to perceive that to the secret self, because it is unegoistic, all things are delight, even those touches which to the mind and body present themselves falsely & unnecessarily as grief and pain. While he persists in these conditions, desire, failure, discontent & pain must be always his portion. He must recognise the Truth, for the Truth only can set him free." Isha Upanishad (CWSA 17: 475–476)

7.

"It is the desire-soul that by its wrong reception of life becomes the cause of a triple misinterpretation of the *rasa*, the delight in things, so that, instead of figuring the pure essential joy of being, it comes rendered unequally into the three terms of pleasure, pain and indifference." (CWSA 21: 235)

8.

"The intelligence coloured by desire is an impure intelligence and it distorts Truth; the will coloured by desire is an impure will and it puts a stamp of distortion, pain and imperfection upon the soul's activity." (CWSA 24: 669)

9.

"The Buddha said or has been made to say that when one is free from all desire, one necessarily enters into infinite bliss. This bliss may be a little dry and anyway it does not seem to me to be the quickest way.

If at the outset one were to seize the problem bodily, jump into it with courage and determination and, instead of undertaking a long, arduous, painful, disappointing hunt after desires, one gives oneself simply, totally, unconditionally, if one surrenders to the Supreme Reality, to the Supreme Will, to the Supreme Being, putting oneself entirely in His hands, in an upsurge of the whole being and all the elements of the being, without calculating, that would be the swiftest and the most radical way to get rid of the ego. People will say that it is difficult to do it, but at least a warmth is there, an ardour, an enthusiasm, a light, a beauty, an ardent and creative life." (CWM 3: 268)

XIV—To Live Only by the Body Is to Be Subject to Pain and Suffering

1.

"The spiritual fullness of the being is eternity; if one has not the consciousness of timeless eternal being, if one is dependent on body or embodied mind or embodied life, or dependent on this world or that world or on this condition of being or that condition of being, that is not the reality of self, not the fullness of our spiritual existence. To live only as a self of body or be only by the body is to be an ephemeral creature, subject to death and desire and pain and suffering and decay and decadence. To transcend, to exceed consciousness of body, not to be held in the body or by the body, to hold the body only as an instrument, a minor outward formation of self, is a first condition of divine living." (CWSA 22: 1062)

2.

"The shutting up of the individual in his own personal consciousness of separate and limited mind, life and body prevents what would otherwise be the natural law of our development. It brings into the body the law of attraction and repulsion, of defence and attack, of discord and pain. For each body being a limited conscious-force feels itself exposed to the attack, impact, forceful contact of other such limited conscious-forces or of universal forces and,

where it feels itself broken in upon or unable to harmonise the contacting and the recipient consciousness, it suffers discomfort and pain, is attracted or repelled, has to defend itself or to assail; it is constantly called upon to undergo what it is unwilling or unable to suffer." (CWSA 21: 262)

3.

"Even when a glory of wisdom crowns his brow,
When mind and spirit shed a grandiose ray
To exalt this product of the sperm and gene,
This alchemist's miracle from plasm and gas,
And he who shared the animal's run and crawl
Lifts his thought-stature to the Immortal's heights,
His life still keeps the human middle way;
His body he resigns to death and pain,
Abandoning Matter, his too heavy charge." (CWSA 33: 338)

XV—Impurities in the Body Show Themselves as Disease or Pain

1.

"Impurities in the body show themselves chiefly as disease, as pain, as the discomfort of heat and cold, as the necessity of the excretive processes. The first sign of Kayashuddhi is the disappearance of all tendency to disease; the second is liberation from the dwandwa of heat and cold, which will either go altogether or change to pleasurable sensations often marked by electrical phenomena; … Pain also can be entirely eliminated from the body, but even before the reaction called pain is got rid of, or even without its being got rid of, the discomfort of pain can be removed and replaced by a sort of bodily Ananda. Finally, the craving of hunger and thirst disappears from the prana to which it belongs and the dependence on food diminishes or ceases. The perfection of all this is the basis of Kayasiddhi." (CWSA 11: 1393–1394)

2.

"The principle upon which this Yoga I am explaining to you stands, is that the gross body is merely the shadow or creation of the subtle. Body is a mould into which mind pours itself, but the mould itself has been prepared by the mind and can be changed by the mind. A mind purified, liberated and perfected (siddha) can do whatever it likes

with the body. It may leave it as it is, allowing the past karma to do its will with the physical part in the form of disease, suffering, misfortune and death, without the mind being in the least affected. All that is impurity and bondage, which is the physical translation and result of mental impurity and bondage. With the cessation of the cause, the effect ceases; but not at once. It is again like the steam and the locomotive. The habits, the results created by past lives, are expelled from the mind and precipitated entirely into the body. You may allow them to work themselves out there, many do that. On the other hand, you may pursue them into the body and drive them out from there as well. In that case you get the Kayashuddhi and the Kayasiddhi. They are usually sought after by the Hathayogic or Rajayogic processes, but these are not necessary. It is even better and certainly much easier and surer to follow the process I have been indicating.

The very fact of having a purified mind makes for purity of the body, a liberated mind for liberation of the body, a perfected mind for perfection of the body, and to a certain extent as you go on with the yoga in the Antahkarana [mind], the body will automatically begin to respond to the new influences. But you should not consciously meddle with the body until you have finished with the mind. Let nature do its work. Detach yourself as much as possible from the body, think of it as a mere case,

leave it to the care of God and His Shakti. Many sadhaks are frightened by illness in the course of the Yoga. You need not be frightened, for you have put yourself in God's hands and He will see to it. It will come to you only as a part of the necessary process for purification of the body, work itself out, fade and return no more. Other disturbances of the body will come which are incidental to the turning of an unfit physical adhar into a fit one. Profound alterations are necessary in your braincells, your nervous system, your digestive and secretive processes and they cannot be effected without some physical disturbance, but it will never be more than is necessary for the process. Do no violence of any kind to the body; if you use physical remedies, let them be of the simplest and purest kind; above all dismiss anxiety and fear. You cannot care more for yourself than God cares for you. Only your care is likely to be ignorant and unwise; His is with knowledge and uses the right means to the right end." (CWSA 11: 1392–1393)

XVI—Pain Can Be Due to Wrong Thinking and Strong Imaginations

1.

"In fact I can assure you that the pain in the stomach as well as many other discomforts are due 90% to wrong thinking and strong imaginations—I mean that the material basis for them is practically negligible.

With love and blessings." (CWM 15: 144)

XVII—Attachment to Outward Pleasures and Pains Is the Cause of the Soul's Sufferings

1.

"It is not one's self, but the band of the spirit's inner enemies that we have to discourage, expel, slay upon the altar of the growth of the spirit; these can be ruthlessly excised, whose names are desire, wrath, inequality, greed, attachment to outward pleasures and pains, the cohort of usurping demons that are the cause of the soul's errors and sufferings. These should be regarded not as part of oneself but as intruders and perverters of our self's real and diviner nature; these have to be sacrificed in the harsher sense of the word, whatever pain in going they may throw by reflection on the consciousness of the seeker." (CWSA 23: 108–109)

XVIII—The Lower Planes of Inconscient Existence Are Painful Without Ananda

1.

"Sachchidananda is the One with a triple aspect. In the Supreme the three are not three but one—existence is consciousness, consciousness is bliss, and they are thus inseparable, not only inseparable but so much each other that they are not distinct at all. In the superior planes of manifestation they become triune—although inseparable, one can be made more prominent and base or lead the others. In the lower planes below they become separable in appearance, though not in their secret reality, and one can exist phenomenally without the others so that we become aware of what seems to us an inconscient or a painful existence or a consciousness without Ananda. Indeed without this separation of them in experience pain and ignorance and falsehood and death and what we call inconscience could not have manifested themselves—there could not have been this evolution of a limited and suffering consciousness out of the universal nescience of Matter." (CWSA 28: 13)

2.

"I know perfectly well that pain and suffering and struggle and excesses of despair are natural—though not inevitable—on the way,—not because they are helps, but

because they are imposed on us by the darkness of this human nature out of which we have to struggle into the Light." (CWSA 29: 470) (CWSA 31: 681)

3.

"... your lower not-self which feels pleasure & pain ..." Isha Upanishad (CWSA 17: 112)

4.

"When you have got this Jnana that all is the One Brahman and your actions are but the dramatic illusions unrolled by Prakriti for the delight of the Purusha, you will then be able to do works without desire or illusion, abandoning the world that you may enjoy it, as the Upanishad tells you, or as Sri Krishna advises, giving up all hankering for the fruits of your work. You will devote all your actions to the Lord; not to the lower false self, which feels pleasure & pain in the results of your actions, but to the Brahman in you which works loksangrahat, for the keeping together of the peoples, so that instead of the uninstructed multitudes being bewildered and led astray by your inactivity, the world may be rather helped, strengthened and maintained by the godlike character of your works. And your works must be godlike if they are done without desire or attachment to their fruits. For this is how God works. The world is His *lila*, His play & sport, not a purposeful stir and

struggle out of which He is to gain something and be benefited." (CWSA 17: 199)

5.

"In order to be characteristically human it has to become first a sense of force, sense of desire, sense of will, sense of intelligent will-action or mentally conscious sense of force-action. His lower delight of being translates itself into a sense of mental or mentalised vital or physical pleasure and its perversion pain, or into a mental or mentalised feeling-sensation of liking and disliking, or into an intelligence of delight and failure of delight,—all phenomena of the intelligent mind-sense." (CWSA 23: 489)

6.

"There is this immeasurable and unstained bliss; but our own being remains the sport of a lower Nature of pleasure and pain and dull neutral sensation incapable of its divine delight." (CWSA 23: 394)

7.

"The vital physical governs all the small daily reactions to outward things—reactions of the nerves and the body consciousness and the reflex reactions and sensations; it motives much of the ordinary actions of man and joins with the lower parts of the vital proper in producing lust, jealousy, anger, violence etc. In its lowest parts (vital-

material) it is the agent of pain, physical illness etc." (CWSA 28: 208–209)

8.
"The lower vital is not a part that listens to reason. There is no *why* to its action; it acts in a particular way because it has long been accustomed to act in that way, and it goes on even if the doing brings a painful reaction." (CWSA 31: 156)

9.
"The more you grumble, the more your pains will increase." (CWM 14: 222)

10.
"Man's lower nature hides these awful guests.
Their vast contagion grips sometimes man's world.
An awful insurgence overpowers man's soul.
In house and house the huge uprising grows:
Hell's companies are loosed to do their work,
Into the earth-ways they break out from all doors,
Invade with blood-lust and the will to slay
And fill with horror and carnage God's fair world.
Death and his hunters stalk a victim earth;
The terrible Angel smites at every door:
An awful laughter mocks at the world's pain
And massacre and torture grin at Heaven:

All is the prey of the destroying force;
Creation rocks and tremble top and base.
This evil Nature housed in human hearts,
A foreign inhabitant, a dangerous guest:
The soul that harbours it it can dislodge,
Expel the householder, possess the house.
An opposite potency contradicting God,
A momentary Evil's almightiness
Has straddled the straight path of Nature's acts.
It imitates the Godhead it denies,
Puts on his figure and assumes his face.
A Manichean creator and destroyer,
This can abolish man, annul his world.
But there is a guardian power, there are Hands that save,
Calm eyes divine regard the human scene." (CWSA 34: 481–482)

XIX—Pain Is the Hammer to Break a Dead Resistance

1.

"By pain and joy, the bright and tenebrous twins,
The inanimate world perceived its sentient soul,
Else had the Inconscient never suffered change.
Pain is the hammer of the Gods to break
A dead resistance in the mortal's heart,
His slow inertia as of living stone.
If the heart were not forced to want and weep,
His soul would have lain down content, at ease,
And never thought to exceed the human start
And never learned to climb towards the Sun.
This earth is full of labour, packed with pain;
'Throes of an endless birth coerce her still;
The centuries end, the ages vainly pass
And yet the Godhead in her is not born'." (CWSA 34: 443–444)

2.

"Pain is the hand of Nature sculpturing men
To greatness: an inspired labour chisels
With heavenly cruelty an unwilling mould." (CWSA 34: 444)

3.

"The great Gods use the pain of human hearts
As a sharp axe to hew their cosmic road:
They squander lavishly men's blood and tears
For a moment's purpose in their fateful work." (CWSA 34: 429)

4.

"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)

5.

"If there were not a resistance in vital human nature, a pressure of forces adverse to the change, forces which delight in imperfection and even in perversion, this change would effect itself without difficulty by a natural and painless flowering—as, for example, your own powers of poetry and music have flowered out here with rapidity and ease under the light and rain of a spiritual and psychic influence—because everything in you desired that change and your vital was willing to recognise imperfections, to

throw away any wrong attitude—e.g., the desire for mere fame—and to be dedicated and perfect." (CWSA 29: 386)

6.

"An evolution from the Inconscient need not be a painful one if there is no resistance; it can be a deliberately slow and beautiful efflorescence of the Divine." (CWSA 28: 278)

7.

"You are assuming that the manifestation from the Inconscient must be what it is now and here and that no other kind of world of Matter was possible, but the harmony of material Nature in itself shows that it need not necessarily be a discordant, evil, furiously perturbed and painful creation—the psychic being, if allowed to manifest from the first in Life and lead the evolution instead of being relegated behind the veil, would have been the principle of a harmonious outflowering; everyone who has felt the psychic at work within him, freed from the vital intervention, can at once see that this would be its effect because of its unerring perception, true choice, harmonic action. If it has not been so, it is because the dark Powers have made Life a claimant instead of an instrument. The reality of the Hostiles and the nature of their role and trend of their endeavour cannot be doubted by anyone who has had his inner vision unsealed and made their unpleasant acquaintance." (CWSA 28: 279)

XX—The Real Ethical Soul Accepts Pains and Sufferings as an Opportunity for Its Growth

1.

"The ethical soul,—not the counterfeit but the real,—accepts the pains and sufferings and difficulties and fierce intimidations of life, not as a punishment for its sins, but as an opportunity and trial, an opportunity for its growth, a trial of its built or native strength, and good fortune and all outer success not as a coveted reward of virtue, but as an opportunity also and an even greater more difficult trial." (CWSA 13: 419)

2.

"Man, therefore, has first of all to become ethical, *sukṛtī*, and then to rise to heights beyond any mere ethical rule of living, to the light, largeness and power of the spiritual nature, where he gets beyond the grasp of the dualities and its delusion, *dvandva-moha*. There he no longer seeks his personal good or pleasure or shuns his personal suffering or pain, for by these things he is no longer affected, nor says any longer, 'I am virtuous,' 'I am sinful,' but acts in his own high spiritual nature by the will of the Divine for the universal good." (CWSA 19: 243)

3.

"Seeing the Self in all creatures, implies seeing the Lord everywhere. The ideal man of Vedanta will accept pain as

readily as pleasure, hatred, wrong, insult and injustice as composedly as love, honour and kindness, death as courageously as life. For in all things he will see the mighty Will which governs the Universe and which wills not only his own good and pleasure and success, but the good and pleasure and success of others equally with his own; which decrees that his own good and the good of others shall be worked out not only by his victories and joys, but by his defeats and sufferings. He will not be terrified by the menace of misfortune or the blows dealt him by man or nature, nor even by his own sins and failures, but walk straight forward in the implicit faith that the Supreme Will is guiding his steps aright and that even his stumblings are necessary in order to reach the goal." (CWSA 17: 283)

4.

"Since the soul in the body is eternally & inalienably free, its bondage to egoism, law of bodily nature, law of mental nature, law of pleasure and pain, law of life and death, can only be an apparent & not a real bondage. Our chains are either a play or an illusion or both play & illusion." (CWSA 17: 354)

5.

"… men grow by all kinds of experience, pain and suffering as well as their opposites, joy and happiness and ecstasy.

One can get strength from them if one meets them in the right way." (CWSA 31: 204)

XXI—The Soul May Accept Painful Experiences for Growth, a Stimulant of Rapid Spiritual Development

1.

"Nor can good fortune and evil fortune, pleasure and pain, happiness and misery and suffering be taken as if they existed merely as incentives and deterrents to the natural being in its choice of good and evil. It is for experience, for growth of the individual being that the soul enters into rebirth; joy and grief, pain and suffering, fortune and misfortune are parts of that experience, means of that growth: even, the soul may of itself accept or choose poverty, misfortune and suffering as helpful to its growth, stimulants of a rapid development, and reject riches and prosperity and success as dangerous and conducive to a relaxation of its spiritual effort." (CWSA 22: 846–847)

2.

"We have to see that God the bountiful and prodigal creator, God the helpful, strong and benignant preserver is also God the devourer and destroyer. The torment of the couch of pain and evil on which we are racked is his touch as much as happiness and sweetness and pleasure. It is only when we see with the eye of the complete union and feel this truth in the depths of our being that we can entirely discover behind that mask too the calm and beautiful face of the all-blissful Godhead and in this touch

that tests our imperfection the touch of the friend and builder of the spirit in man." (CWSA 19: 382)

3.

93. "Pain is the touch of our Mother teaching us how to bear and grow in rapture. She has three stages of her schooling, endurance first, next equality of soul, last ecstasy." Thoughts and Aphorisms (CWSA 12: 433)

4.

135. "All disease is a means towards some new joy of health, all evil & pain a tuning of Nature for some more intense bliss & good, all death an opening on widest immortality. Why and how this should be so, is God's secret which only the soul purified of egoism can penetrate." Thoughts and Aphorisms (CWSA 12: 438–439)

5.

"If man lives bound by his humanity,
If he is tied for ever to his pain,
Let a greater being then arise from man,
The superhuman with the Eternal mate
And the Immortal shine through earthly forms.
Else were creation vain and this great world
A nothing that in Time's moments seems to be." (CWSA 34: 693)

6.

"A thinking animal, Nature's struggling lord,
Has made of her his nurse and tool and slave
And pays to her as wage and emolument
Inescapably by a deep law in things
His heart's grief and his body's death and pain:
His pains are her means to grow, to see and feel;
His death assists her immortality." (CWSA 34: 511)

XXII—Pain Comes to Teach Us Many Things

A—When the inner disorder becomes painful, the intensity of aspiration grows

"It has become a certainty, because in all the cells there is born the aspiration, which is becoming more and more intense and which wonders at the resistance; but they have observed that whenever something goes wrong in the working (that is to say, instead of being supple, spontaneous, natural, the working becomes a painful effort, a struggle against something which takes the appearance of a bad will, but is only a reticence that does not understand), at that moment, the intensity of the aspiration, of the call, is tenfold, becomes constant. The difficulty is to remain at that state of intensity. Generally everything falls back, I cannot say into a somnolence, but a kind of relaxation: you take things easy; and it is only when the inner disorder becomes painful that the intensity grows and remains permanent. For hours— hours together—without slackening, the call, the aspiration, the will to be united with the Divine, to become the Divine, is maintained at its maximum. Why? Because there was externally what is called a physical disorder, a suffering. Otherwise, when there is no suffering, from time to time one soars up, then one falls back into a slackening; again another time one soars up once more... there is no end to

it. That lasts eternally. If we want things to go fast (relatively fast according to the rhythm of our life), this smack of the whip is necessary. I am convinced of it, because as soon as you are within your inner being you look upon that with contempt (as regards oneself)." (CWM 11: 41–42)

B—Pain, sorrow or misery is an opportunity for the Divine to grow closer to you

"*Here, you have said: 'Whether Thou choosest for me life or death, happiness or sorrow, pleasure or suffering, all that comes to me from Thee will be welcome.'*

Does the Divine give suffering or sorrow?

Well, my child, that text, you know what it is: it is Radha's prayer to Krishna. And so, it is such a personification of divine forces that one is obliged to extend human feelings to the Divine in order to be able to express oneself. To understand it in its true form a whole long explanation would be required, and then it is no longer artistic—it becomes dogmatic or in any case didactic. It is to give the idea that all is in the Divine and all is divine. And necessarily, if one changes the state of consciousness and is identified with the Divine, that changes the very nature of things. For example, what seemed pain or sorrow or

misery—one becomes aware quite on the contrary that it is an opportunity for the Divine's growing closer to you, and that from this event perhaps one may draw a still greater joy than that experienced from something satisfying. Only, you must understand it like that, in that spirit and with that consciousness, for otherwise, if taken in the ordinary sense, it is the very contradiction of the principle that all is divine.

The same thing, exactly the same vibration, according to the way in which it is received and responded to, brings either an intense joy or considerable despair, exactly the same, according to the state of consciousness one is in. So there is nothing of which it could be said: it is a misfortune. There is nothing that could be called suffering. All that is necessary is to change one's state of consciousness. That is all. Only (I have written this somewhere, I don't know where now), if you yourself succeed in changing your state of consciousness and enter this condition of bliss, you can see others still quarrelling, fighting, being unhappy, suffering and feeling miserable, and you yourself feel that everything is so harmonious, so wonderful, so sweet, so pleasant, and you say: 'Well, why don't they do what I do?' But the trouble is that everybody is not ready to do that! And for those who remain in the ordinary consciousness, for them suffering is something very real." (CWM 5: 384)

C—Pain finds the luminous truth, the unvarying delight which is at the core of all things

D—In pain one most easily finds the true strength and true faith

E—Pain teaches us to emerge from the ego, get out of its prison, and unite ourselves with the Divine

F—Pain is an all-powerful remedy, not only in the deeper parts of the being, in the soul, in the spiritual consciousness, but also in life and in the body

"Quite naturally we ask ourselves what this secret is, towards which pain leads us. For a superficial and imperfect understanding, one could believe that it is pain which the soul is seeking. Nothing of the kind. The very nature of the soul is divine Delight, constant, unvarying, unconditioned, ecstatic; but it is true that if one can face suffering with courage, endurance, an unshakable faith in the divine Grace, if one can, instead of shunning suffering when it comes, enter into it with this will, this aspiration to go through it and find the luminous truth, the unvarying delight which is at the core of all things, the door of pain is often more direct, more immediate than that of satisfaction or contentment.

I am not speaking of pleasure because pleasure turns its back constantly and almost completely on this profound divine Delight.

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

...

I have already told you many a time that to seek suffering and pain is a morbid attitude which must be avoided, but to run away from them through forgetfulness, through a superficial, frivolous movement, through diversion, is cowardice. When pain comes, it comes to teach us something. The quicker we learn it, the more the need for pain diminishes, and when we know the secret, it will no longer be possible to suffer, for that secret reveals to us the reason, the cause, the origin of suffering, and the way to pass beyond it.

The secret is to emerge from the ego, get out of its prison, unite ourselves with the Divine, merge into Him, not to allow anything to separate us from Him. Then, once one has discovered this secret and realises it in one's being, pain loses its justification and suffering disappears. It is an all-powerful remedy, not only in the deeper parts of the

being, in the soul, in the spiritual consciousness, but also in life and in the body.

There is no illness, no disorder which can resist the discovery of this secret and the putting of it into practice, not only in the higher parts of the being but in the cells of the body.

If one knows how to teach the cells the splendour that lies within them, if one knows how to make them understand the reality which makes them exist, gives them being, then they too enter the total harmony, and the physical disorder which causes the illness vanishes as do all other disorders of the being.

But for that one must be neither cowardly nor fearful. When the physical disorder comes, one must not be afraid; one must not run away from it, must face it with courage, calmness, confidence, with the certitude that illness is a *falsehood* and that if one turns entirely, in full confidence, with a complete quietude to the divine Grace, It will settle in these cells as It is established in the depths of the being, and the cells themselves will share in the eternal Truth and Delight." (CWM 9: 41–43)

"Once more, the lack of faith of the human mind brings complications and pain where with a quiet faith in the Divine Guidance all could be very simple and easy.

It is for the growth of this faith and confidence that I have been working for many years.

Obviously the resistance is obstinate." (CWM 14: 88)

G—Had we not suffered, we would not have possessed, trained, and perfected this infinitely and multitudinously sensible capacity for delight in our mind, heart, and body

Aphorism 495 – I used to hate and avoid pain and resent its infliction; but now I find that had I not so suffered, I would not now possess, trained and perfected, this infinitely and multitudinously sensible capacity of delight in my mind, heart and body. God justifies Himself in the end even when He has masked Himself as a bully and a tyrant." (CWM 10: 349)

H—One rises through the cruel and incessant anguish of pain to a blissful painlessness
I—Through sorrow one rises to an infinite knowledge and a settled peace

Aphorism 496 – I swore that I would not suffer from the world's grief and the world's stupidity and cruelty and injustice and I made my heart as hard in endurance as the nether millstone and my mind as a polished surface of steel. I no longer suffered, but enjoyment had passed away from me. Then God

broke my heart and ploughed up my mind. I rose through cruel and incessant anguish to a blissful painlessness and through sorrow and indignation and revolt to an infinite knowledge and a settled peace." (CWM 10: 349)

J—When people find themselves in painful and difficult circumstances, only then do they ask themselves, 'But after all, why am I here?'
K— Only after that does one begin the search and recognise that one has the Divine Self within, the psychic being with which one must unite.

"One lives from day to day the events of each day. When one is very young, one thinks of playing, eating, and a little later of learning, and after that one thinks of all the circumstances of life. But to put this problem to oneself, to confront this problem and ask oneself: 'But after all, *why* am I here?' How many do that? There are people to whom this idea comes only when they are facing a catastrophe. When they see someone whom they love die or when they find themselves in particularly painful and difficult circumstances, they turn back upon themselves, if they are sufficiently intelligent, and ask themselves: 'But really, what is this tragedy we are living, and what's the use of it and what is its purpose?'

And only at that moment does one begin the search to know.

And it is only when one has found, you see, found what he says, found that one has a divine Self and that consequently one must seek to know this divine Self.... This comes much later, and yet, in spite of everything, from the very moment of birth in a physical body, there is in the being, in its depths, this psychic presence which pushes the whole being towards this fulfilment. But who knows it and recognises it, this psychic being? That too comes only in special circumstances, and unfortunately, most of the time these have to be painful circumstances, otherwise one goes on living unthinkingly. And in the depths of one's being is this psychic being which seeks, seeks, seeks to awaken the consciousness and re-establish the union. One knows nothing about it.

When you were ten years old, did you know this? No, you didn't. Well, still in the depths of your being your psychic being already wanted it and was seeking for it. It was probably your psychic which brought you here." (CWM 9: 16–17)

L—When true compassion of the Divine Love comes, the aspiration to soothe, to cure, and to remove all pain in all beings takes birth

"But then, all of a sudden, when there comes this true Compassion of the Divine Love, and when one sees all these things that appear so horrible, so abnormal, so absurd, this great pain which is upon all beings and even upon all things... then there takes birth in this physical being the aspiration to soothe, to cure, to remove that. There is in Love, at its Origin, something which is translated constantly as the intervention of Grace: a force, a sweetness, something like a vibration of solace spread everywhere, but which an illumined consciousness can direct, concentrate on some points." (CWM 11: 42)

XXIII—In Evolution, Pain Can Be a Temporary Stage of Development Necessary to Prepare a Higher Race

1.

"Everything is in nature as the result of evolution. Nature is blind and unintelligent and has therefore no conception of good or evil; the conception belongs to the human mind and is the result of the social sense and the ideas of pleasure and pain developed in human beings by a perfectly intelligible natural process. It is to men who believe in Intelligence as governing and developing the world that the problem exists." (CWSA 13: 60)

2.

"The problem of pain remains. Was it necessary that the process should be accompanied with pain to the individual? At one time the capacity for pain, physical and mental, was infinitely less than it is now, so little that it might be pronounced to be nil. It is a remarkable fact that disease, pain and grief have grown keener with the growing fineness of the human organisation. Obviously this can only be a temporary development necessary to prepare a higher race which shall rise above pain to a higher capacity for pleasure and happiness. The lower organisation resisted the *saṁskāra* of pain and grief by the coarseness of its composition, it rejected pain in the sense of not knowing

it. The higher organisation of the future will not be below it, but rise above it. It was the knowledge of good and evil that brought grief and sin into the world; when that knowledge is surmounted, man will rise above grief and sin. Before he ate the forbidden fruit, he had the innocence of the animal; when he shall cease to eat it, he will have the innocence of the God. Is it not so that in nature pain is a possibility which has to be exhausted and man has been selected as the instrument to bring it into existence, in a limited space, for a limited time, and work it out of the cosmos? In the light of this idea the Christian doctrine of the Son of Man on the cross acquires a new significance and man himself becomes the Christ of the universe." (CWSA 13: 62–63)

3.

"The meaning of this world must evidently lie in this opposition; it must be an evolution which is leading or struggling towards higher things out of a first darker appearance. Whatever guidance there is must be given under these conditions of opposition and struggle and must be leading towards that higher state of things. It is leading the individual, certainly, and the world, presumably, towards the higher state, but through the double terms of knowledge and ignorance, light and darkness, death and life, pain and pleasure, happiness and suffering; none of the terms can be excluded until the higher status is

reached and established. It is not and cannot be, ordinarily, a guidance which at once rejects the darker terms or still less a guidance which brings us solely and always nothing but happiness, success and good fortune. Its main concern is with the growth of our being and consciousness, the growth towards a higher self, towards the Divine, eventually towards a highest Light, Truth and Bliss; the rest is secondary, sometimes a means, sometimes a result, not a primary purpose." (CWSA 29: 176–177)

XXIV—With Pain, All Creation Comes

1.

"The ancient Mother faces all with joy,
Calls for the ardent pang, the grandiose thrill;
For with pain and labour all creation comes.
This earth is full of the anguish of the gods;
Ever they travail driven by Time's goad,
And strive to work out the eternal Will
And shape the life divine in mortal forms.
His will must be worked out in human breasts
Against the Evil that rises from the gulfs,
Against the world's Ignorance and its obstinate strength,
Against the stumblings of man's pervert will,
Against the deep folly of his human mind,
Against the blind reluctance of his heart.
The spirit is doomed to pain till man is free.
There is a clamour of battle, a tramp, a march:
A cry arises like a moaning sea,
A desperate laughter under the blows of death,
A doom of blood and sweat and toil and tears.
Men die that man may live and God be born." (CWSA 34: 444)

XXV—Without the Experience of Pain, We Would Not Realise the Infinite Value of the Divine Delight

1.

"For without experience of pain we would not get all the infinite value of the divine delight of which pain is in travail [*laborious effort*]; all ignorance is a penumbra which environs an orb of knowledge, every error is significant of the possibility and the effort of a discovery of truth; every weakness and failure is a first sounding of gulfs of power and potentiality; all division is intended to enrich by an experience of various sweetness of unification the joy of realised unity. All this imperfection is to us evil, but all evil is in travail of the eternal good; for all is an imperfection which is the first condition—in the law of life evolving out of Inconscience—of a greater perfection in the manifesting of the hidden divinity." (CWSA 21: 421–422)

2.

494. "I used to hate and avoid pain and resent its infliction; but now I find that had I not so suffered, I would not now possess, trained and perfected, this infinitely & multitudinously sensible capacity of delight in my mind, heart and body. God justifies himself in the end even when He has masked Himself as a bully and a tyrant." Thoughts and Aphorisms (CWSA 12: 492)

3.

500. "Suffering makes us capable of the full force of the Master of Delight; it makes us capable also to bear the utter play of the Master of Power. Pain is the key that opens the gates of strength; it is the high-road that leads to the city of beatitude." Thoughts and Aphorisms (CWSA 12: 493)

XXVI—Overcoming Painful Situations in Sadhana

A—Pain of separation, the tears of longing, and the delight of the Godhead in the yoga of divine love

1.

"But there is the more intimate Yoga [*The Yoga of Divine Love*] which from the first consists in this love and attains only by the intensity of its longing without other process or method. All the rest comes, but it comes out of this, as leaf and flower out of the seed; other things are not the means of developing and fulfilling love, but the radiations of love already growing in the soul. … There is the disturbance of the whole life, the illumination by an unseized vision, the unsatisfied yearning for a single object of the heart's desire, the intense impatience of all that distracts from the one preoccupation, the intense pain of the obstacles that stand in the way of possession, the perfect vision of all beauty and delight in a single form. And there are all the many moods of love, the joy of musing and absorption, the delight of the meeting and fulfilment and embrace, the pain of separation, the wrath of love, the tears of longing, the increased delight of reunion. The heart is the scene of this supreme idyll of the inner consciousness, but a heart which undergoes increasingly an intense spiritual change and becomes the radiantly unfolding lotus of the spirit. And as the intensity of its seeking is beyond the highest power

of the normal human emotions, so also the delight and the final ecstasy are beyond the reach of the imagination and beyond expression by speech. For this is the delight of the Godhead that passes human understanding." (CWSA 24: 575–576)

2.

"Really, however, the more intimate yoga of Bhakti resolves itself simply into these four movements, the desire of the Soul when it turns towards God and the straining of its emotion towards him, the pain of love and the divine return of love, the delight of love possessed and the play of that delight, and the eternal enjoyment of the divine Lover which is the heart of celestial bliss." (CWSA 24: 571)

3.

"So too in all happenings we have to come to see the dealings with us of the divine Lover and take such pleasure in them that even grief and suffering and physical pain become his gifts and turn to delight and disappear finally into delight, slain by the sense of the divine contact, because the touch of his hands is the alchemist of a miraculous transformation. Some reject life because it is tainted with grief and pain, but to the God-lover grief and pain become means of meeting with him, imprints of his pressure and finally cease as soon as our union with his nature becomes too complete for these masks of the

universal delight at all to conceal it. They change into the Ananda." (CWSA 24: 602)

4.

"This universal love is liberative and dynamic for transformation; for the discord of forms and appearances ceases to affect the heart that has felt the one Truth behind them all and understood their perfect significance. The impartial equality of soul of the selfless worker and knower is transformed by the magic touch of divine Love into an all-embracing ecstasy and million-bodied beatitude. All things become bodies and all movements the playings of the divine Beloved in his infinite house of pleasure. Even pain is changed and in their reaction and even in their essence things painful alter; the forms of pain fall away, there are created in their place the forms of Ananda.

This is in its essence the nature of the change of consciousness which turns existence itself into a glorified field of a Divine Love and Ananda. In its essence it begins for the seeker when he passes from the ordinary to the spiritual level and looks with a new heart of luminous vision and feeling on the world and self and others." (CWSA 23: 161)

5.

"Where first there is love and attraction, the relations between the Divine and the soul may still for long be

chequered with misunderstanding and offence, jealousy and wrath, strife and the quarrels of love, hope and despair and the pain of absence and separation. We throw up all the passions of the heart against him, till they are purified into a sole ecstasy of bliss and oneness. But that too is no monotony; it is not possible for the tongue of human speech to tell all the utter unity and all the eternal variety of the ananda of divine love. Our higher and our lower members are both flooded with it, the mind and life no less than the soul: even the physical body takes its share of the joy, feels the touch, is filled in all its limbs, veins, nerves with the flowing of the wine of the ecstasy, *amṛta.* Love and Ananda are the last word of being, the secret of secrets, the mystery of mysteries." (CWSA 24: 605)

B—If relationship is based on the soul, then suffering, pain, or grief will be replaced by peace and bliss

1.

Aphorism 138 – The force of soul in thee meeting the same force from outside cannot harmonise the measures of the contact in values of mind-experience and body-experience; therefore thou hast pain, grief or uneasiness. If thou canst learn to adjust the replies of the force in thyself to the questions of world-force, thou shalt find pain

becoming pleasurable or turning into pure delightfulness. Right relation is the condition of blissfulness, Ritam the key of Ananda.

Human beings are in the habit of basing their relationships with others on physical, vital and mental contacts; that is why there is almost always discord and suffering. If, on the contrary, they based their relationships on psychic contacts (between soul and soul) , they would find that behind the troubled appearances there is a profound and lasting harmony which can express itself in all the activities of life and cause disorder and suffering to be replaced by peace and bliss." (CWM 10: 245–246)

C—Due to resistance in the Adhar, the pain is felt when the Divine Force descends

1.

"The pressure is that of the Divine Force which he calls by his prayer descending to do its work in the Adhar, its passage being marked by the current which he feels. The pain was due to some resistance in the Adhar; it disappears as soon as the system is accustomed to the descent and grows wide enough to admit it. The first result of the descent is the calm which he experiences; for it is only in a calm mind and vital (*manaḥ-prāṇa*) that the Divine Shakti can do her work rightly." (CWSA 30: 470)

2.

"The experience of the action in the three centres is perfectly all right (the opening to the higher consciousness and its characteristic action and results already beginning there) except for the pains which mean a resistance. These experiences are quite sound and according to the divine schedule. But the pain at the bottom of the neck indicates that in trying to pass from mind to higher vital towards the heart, the Consciousness encountered an obstruction. However that too is in the day's work. It will be overcome in due time. So nothing to grumble—there at least." (CWSA 30: 487–488)

3.

"*X: It was like a pain in the heart which lasted for a day. The next day, when I woke up it was as if I were coming out from a profound meditation and all my thoughts, all my actions seemed to be directed by something or someone who was watching beside my head. All the words which came out of my mouth were right.*

What was this pain like? a pressure? a tearing apart? a tension?

X: It was as though something in me was not happy, but all that changed during the night; the next day the uneasiness had gone.

It was undoubtedly a mental opening to the higher consciousness, an ascent of the mental consciousness towards the higher consciousness. And it was probably a resistance in the emotional vital which caused the pain, that disagreeable sensation which disappeared during the night with the liberation of the consciousness in a higher domain.

Y: When I stood before Sri Aurobindo, I felt a kind of sharp pain. I prayed to Sri Aurobindo to give me something. And suddenly the pain was changed into an intense joy.

This was a contact with your psychic being." (CWM 4: 19–20)

4.

"I have felt a sort of pain, especially in the chest, as reaction to the intense descent of the vibration-force, and I have had the impression that the body wanted to prevent it.

In order that the experience may not be dangerously deformed and painful, one should keep an absolute calm.

It is only in the peace and the calm that the Divine Force expresses itself and acts." (CWM 14: 56)

D—Pain is caused by a lack of receptivity when the force comes

1.

"*How can one increase the receptivity of the body?*

It depends on the part. The method is almost the same for all parts of the being. To begin with, the first condition: to remain as quiet as possible. You may notice that in the different parts of your being, when something comes and you do not receive it, this produces a shrinking—there is something which hardens in the vital, the mind or the body. There is a stiffening and this hurts, one feels a mental, vital or physical pain. So, the first thing is to put one's will and relax this shrinking, as one does a twitching nerve or a cramped muscle; you must learn how to relax, be able to relieve this tension in whatever part of the being it may be.

The method of relaxing the contraction may be different in the mind, the vital or the body, but logically it is the same thing. Once you have relaxed the tension, you see first if the disagreeable effect ceases, which would prove that it was a small momentary resistance, but if the pain continues and if it is indeed necessary to increase the receptivity in order to be able to receive what is helpful, what should be received, you must, after having relaxed this contraction, begin trying to widen yourself—you feel you are widening yourself. There are many methods. Some

find it very useful to imagine they are floating on water with a plank under their back. Then they widen themselves, widen, until they become the vast liquid mass. Others make an effort to identify themselves with the sky and the stars, so they widen, widen themselves, identifying themselves more and more with the sky. Others again don't need these pictures; they can become conscious of their consciousness, enlarge their consciousness more and more until it becomes unlimited. One can enlarge it till it becomes vast as the earth and even the universe. When one does that one becomes really receptive. As I have said, it is a question of training. In any case, from an immediate point of view, when something comes and one feels that it is too strong, that it gives a headache, that one can't bear it, the method is just the same, you must act upon the contraction. One can act through thought, by calling the peace, tranquillity (the feeling of peace takes away much of the difficulty) like this: "Peace, peace, peace... tranquillity... calm." Many discomforts, even physical, like all these contractions of the solar plexus, which are so unpleasant and give you at times nausea, the sensation of being suffocated, of not being able to breathe again, can disappear thus. It is the nervous centre which is affected, it gets affected very easily. As soon as there is something which affects the solar plexus, you must say, "Calm... calm... calm", become more and more calm until the tension is destroyed." (CWM 4: 265–266)

E—In yoga, the state in which vigilance is relaxed is extremely painful

1.

"The tide of materialistic thoughts is always on the watch, waiting for the least weakness, and if we relax but one moment from our vigilance, if we are even slightly negligent, it rushes in and invades us from all sides, submerging under its heavy flood the result sometimes of numberless efforts. Then the being enters a sort of torpor, its physical needs of food and sleep increase, its intelligence is clouded, its inner vision veiled, and in spite of the little interest it really finds in such superficial activities, they occupy it almost exclusively. This state is extremely painful and tiring, for nothing is more tiring than materialistic thoughts, and the mind, worn out, suffers like a caged bird which cannot spread its wings and yet longs to be able to soar freely.

But perhaps this state has its own use which I do not see. . . . In any case, I do not struggle; and like a child in its mother's arms, like a fervent disciple at the feet of his master, I trust myself to Thee and surrender to Thy guidance, sure of Thy victory." (CWM 1: 46)

2.

"Almost all know only the material life heavy, inert, conservative, obscure; their vital forces are so tied to this

physical form of existence that, even when left to themselves and outside the body, they are still solely occupied with these material contingencies that are yet so harassing and painful." (CWM 1: 258)

F—The struggle of an egoistic person to become conscious of the Divine Presence within is long and painful

1.

"The individual Self and the universal Self are one; in every world, in every being, in every thing, in every atom is the Divine Presence, and man's mission is to manifest it.

In order to do that, he must become conscious of this Divine Presence within him. Some individuals must undergo a real apprenticeship in order to achieve this: their egoistic being is too all-absorbing, too rigid, too conservative, and their struggles against it are long and painful. Others, on the contrary, who are more impersonal, more plastic, more spiritualised, come easily into contact with the inexhaustible divine source of their being. But let us not forget that they too should devote themselves daily, constantly, to a methodical effort of adaptation and transformation, so that nothing within them may ever again obscure the radiance of that pure light." (CWM 2: 41–42)

G—With inner growth, things not essential for yoga become terribly painful

1.

"Certainly there is a moment in the course of the inner growth when far from having to make an effort to concentrate, to become absorbed in the contemplation and the seeking of the truth and its best expression—what the Buddhists call meditation—you feel, on the contrary, a kind of relief, ease, rest, joy, and to have to come out of that in order to deal with things that are not essential, everything that may seem like a waste of time, becomes terribly painful. External activities get reduced to what is absolutely necessary, to those that are done as service to the Divine. All that is futile, useless, precisely those things which seem like a waste of time and effort, all that, far from giving the least satisfaction, creates a kind of discomfort and fatigue; you feel happy only when you are concentrated on your goal.

Then you are really on the way." (CWM 3: 209)

2.

"It is the materialism of modern times that has turned spiritual effort into a hard struggle and a sacrifice, a painful renunciation of all the so-called joys of life.

This insistence on the exclusive reality of the physical world, of physical pleasures, physical joys, physical

possessions, is the result of the whole materialistic tendency of human civilisation. It was unthinkable in ancient times. On the contrary, withdrawal, concentration, liberation from all material cares, consecration to the spiritual joy, that was happiness indeed." (CWM 3: 203)

H—Going away from the Ashram once the psychic being is fully awake is a too painful condition

1.

"What you have seen is quite correct. When the psychic being has been once fully awake as it was all these days in you, then it is not possible for the sadhak to revolt and go away; for if he does, he leaves his soul behind him with the Mother and it is only the outer being that lives for a while elsewhere. But that is too painful a condition; one has either to come back or life becomes hardly worth living. But there is no danger of that for you, now you have understood and have the true feeling." (CWSA 32: 369–370)

I—Rejection has to be done regardless of the pain it can cause when going

1.

"The vulgar conception of sacrifice is an act of painful self-immolation, austere self-mortification, difficult self-

effacement; this kind of sacrifice may go even as far as self-mutilation and self-torture. These things may be temporarily necessary in man's hard endeavour to exceed his natural self; if the egoism in his nature is violent and obstinate, it has to be met sometimes by an answering strong internal repression and counterbalancing violence. But the Gita discourages any excess of violence done to oneself; for the self within is really the Godhead evolving, it is Krishna, it is the Divine; it has not to be troubled and tortured as the Titans of the world trouble and torture it, but to be increased, fostered, cherished, luminously opened to a divine light and strength and joy and wideness. It is not one's self, but the band of the spirit's inner enemies that we have to discourage, expel, slay upon the altar of the growth of the spirit; these can be ruthlessly excised, whose names are desire, wrath, inequality, greed, attachment to outward pleasures and pains, the cohort of usurping demons that are the cause of the soul's errors and sufferings. These should be regarded not as part of oneself but as intruders and perverters of our self's real and diviner nature; these have to be sacrificed in the harsher sense of the word, whatever pain in going they may throw by reflection on the consciousness of the seeker." (CWSA 23: 108–109)

2.

"*Sweet Mother, I have not understood this: "The spirit's inner enemies... have to be sacrificed in the harsher sense*

of the word, whatever pain in going they may throw by reflection on the consciousness of the seeker."

"… When, for instance, you have a movement you don't like—a movement of anger or spite, all kinds of things like that, or an insincerity or something you don't like—when you reject it from yourself, when you want to make an effort not to have it any more, it hurts you, doesn't it? It hurts, it is as though something was being pulled out. Well, this is the pain he is speaking about; he says that it is the bad thing you throw away from you which, when leaving, gives you a nice little knock as a parting gift. That's what he says.

For you are always under the illusion that pain belongs to you. This is not true. Pain is something thrust upon you. The same event could occur, *exactly* the same in all its details, without its inflicting the shadow of a pain on you; on the contrary, sometimes it can fill you with ecstatic joy. And it is exactly the same thing. But in one case, you are open to the adverse forces you want to reject from yourself, and in the other you are not, you are already too far away from them to be affected by them any longer; and so, instead of feeling the negative side they represent, you feel only the positive side the Divine represents in the experience. It is the divine Grace which makes you progress, and with the divine Grace you feel the divine Joy. But instead of identifying yourself with the Grace which

makes you progress, you identify yourself with the ugly thing you want to get rid of; and so, naturally, you feel like it and suffer.

That is an experiment you can make if you are just a little conscious. There is something in you which you don't want, something bad—for one reason or another you don't want it, you want to pull it out—well, if you identify yourself ever so little with that thing, you feel the pain of the extraction; if, on the contrary, you identify yourself with the divine Force which comes to liberate you, you feel the joy of the divine Grace—and you experience the deep delight of the progress you have made.

And this is a sure sign for you, a sure indication of what you identify yourself with. If you are identified with the forces from below, you suffer; if you are identified with the forces from above, you are happy. And I am not speaking about feeling pleasure; you must not think that when one jumps about, dances, shouts and plays, one is identified with the divine forces—one may or may not be. That is not what I am speaking of. I am speaking of the divine Joy, the inner Joy which is unalloyed.

Each time a shadow passes, with what may be just an uneasiness or what may become a severe pain or an unbearable suffering, through the whole range, from the smallest to the greatest—as soon as it appears in your being, you may tell yourself, 'Ah, the enemy is there!'—in one form or another." (CWM 8: 83–85)

J—To find the cause of undefinable uneasiness, identify a painful impression, and remove it

1.

"Simply observe. You are in a certain condition, a certain undefinable condition. Then look: 'What! how is it I am like that?' You try to see first if you have fever or some other illness; but it is all right, everything is all right, there's neither headache nor fever, the stomach is not protesting, the heart is functioning as it should, indeed, all's well, you are normal. 'Why then am I feeling so uneasy?'... So you go a little further within. It depends on cases. Sometimes you find out immediately: yes, there was a little incident which wasn't pleasant, someone said a word that was not happy or one had failed in his task or perhaps did not know one's lesson very well, the teacher had made a remark. At the time, one did not pay attention properly, but later on, it begins to work, leaves a painful impression. That is the second stage. Afterwards, if nothing happened: 'All's well, everything is normal, everything usual, I have nothing to note down, nothing has happened: why then do I feel like that?' Now it begins to be interesting, because one must enter much more deeply within oneself. And then it can be all sorts of things: it may be precisely the expression of an attack that is preparing; it may be a little inner anxiety seeking the progress that has to be made; it may be a premonition that there is somewhere in contact with

oneself something not altogether harmonious which one has to change: something one must see, discover, change, on which light is to be put, something that is still there, deep down, and which should no longer be there. Then if you look at yourself very carefully, you find out: 'There! I am still like that; in that little corner, there is still something of that kind, not clear: a little selfishness, a little ill-will, something refusing to change.' So you see it, you take it by the tip of its nose or by the ear and hold it up in full light: So, you were hiding! you are hiding? But I don't want you any longer.' And then it has to go away." (CWM 5: 102)

2.

"There is another quality which must be cultivated in a child from a very young age: that is the feeling of uneasiness, of a moral disbalance which it feels when it has done certain things, not because it has been told not to do them, not because it fears punishment, but spontaneously. For example, a child who hurts its comrade through mischief, if it is in its normal, natural state, will experience uneasiness, a grief deep in its being, because what it has done is contrary to its inner truth.

For in spite of all teachings, in spite of all that thought can think, there is something in the depths which has a feeling of a perfection, a greatness, a truth, and is painfully contradicted by all the movements opposing this truth. If a child has not been spoilt by its milieu, by deplorable

examples around it, that is, if it is in the normal state, spontaneously, without its being told anything, it will feel an uneasiness when it has done something against the truth of its being. And it is exactly upon this that later its effort for progress must be founded." (CWM 4: 24)

K—A painful situation when the mind has progressed and the vital is not converted

1.

"*Between the vital being and the mental, which progresses faster generally?*

That depends on people. It is the vital in those who have a stronger vital and the mental in those who have a stronger mental being. You mean in the same person? That depends absolutely on which one is more active and more strong. In what way? In each person the combination is different, so one cannot make a general rule and say how it must be. One can say that in certain types of cases, it is like this, and in certain others it is like that.

But to tell the truth, I do not believe that much progress can be made if the two do not agree, if one pulls one way and the other another. It will always be difficult. And generally it is better if the mind is converted first, for it is the mind that must have the power to organise the other parts of the being.

…

If the vital is not converted and if the mind is convinced?

Well, you pass your life in quarrelling with yourself! One draws you to one side and the other tries to be your good mentor but you don't listen to it. So you feel as though pulled from all sides. You know what you ought to do and you do not do it. You know what ought not to be done and you do it. And because you do stupid things, you feel sorry. So there are two things, you are unhappy for two reasons: first of all, because of the stupid things you have done, and then due to the regret they bring. It is a somewhat painful situation...." (CWM 5: 252–253)

2.

"*Can't the vital be converted?*

Convert the vital? Surely one can. It is a difficult task, but it can be done. If it could not be done, then there would be no hope. But generally the mind is not sufficient. For, I have known very many people who could see very clearly, understand very well, were mentally thoroughly convinced, could even describe to you and tell you extraordinary things, could easily give excellent lessons to others, but their vital was up to all sorts of tricks and would not listen

at all to all that. It said, 'It is all the same to me, say what you may; as for myself, I go my own way!'

It is only when contact with the psychic has been established that this can convert anything at all—even the worst criminal—in a moment. These are those 'illuminations' which seize you and turn you inside out completely. After that, all goes well. There may be slight difficulties of adjustment, but still things go well.

But the mind is a big preacher, that is its nature: it gives speeches, sermons, as it is done in the churches. So the vital usually gets impatient and answers the mind, not very politely: 'You are a nuisance! what you say is very good for you, but for me it won't do.' Or, at the best, when the mind is gifted with especially remarkable capacities and the vital is of a little higher kind, it may say: 'Oh! how beautiful it is, what you tell me (sometimes this happens), but you see, I, I am unable to do it; it is very beautiful, but it is beyond my capacity.'

But this vital is a strange creature. It is a being of passion, enthusiasm and naturally of desire; but, for example, it is quite capable of getting enthusiastic over something beautiful, of admiring, sensing anything greater and nobler than itself. And if really anything very beautiful occurs in the being, if there is a movement having an exceptional value, well, it may get enthusiastic and it is capable of giving itself with complete devotion—with a generosity that is not found, for example, in the mental

domain nor in the physical. It has that fullness in action that comes precisely from its capacity to get enthused and throw itself wholly without reserve into what it does. Heroes are always people who have a strong vital, and when the vital becomes passionate about something, it is no longer a reasonable being but a warrior; it is wholly involved in its action and can perform exceptional things because it does not calculate, does not reason, does not say 'One must take precautions, one must not do this, must not do that.' It becomes reckless, it gets carried away, as people say, it gives itself totally. Therefore, it can do magnificent things if it is guided in the right way.

A converted vital is an all-powerful instrument. And sometimes it gets converted by something exceptionally beautiful, morally or materially. When it witnesses, for example, a scene of total self-abnegation, of uncalculating self-giving—one of those things so exceedingly rare but splendidly beautiful—it can be carried away by it, it can be seized by an ambition to do the same thing. It begins by an ambition, it ends with a consecration.

There is only one thing the vital abhors; it is a dull life, monotonous, grey, tasteless, worthless. Faced with that, it goes to sleep, falls into inertia. It likes extremely violent things, it is true; it can be extremely wicked, extremely cruel, extremely generous, extremely good and extremely heroic. It always goes to extremes and can be on one side or the other, yes, as the current flows.

And this vital, if you place it in a bad environment, it will imitate the bad environment and do bad things with violence and to an extreme degree. If you place it in the presence of something wonderfully beautiful, generous, great, noble, divine, it can be carried away with that also, forget everything else and give itself wholly. It will give itself more completely than any other part of the being, for it does not calculate. It follows its passion and enthusiasm. When it has desires, its desires are violent, arbitrary, and it does not at all take into account the good or bad of others; it doesn't care the least bit. But when it gives itself to something beautiful, it does not calculate either, it will give itself entirely without knowing whether it will do good or harm to it. It is a very precious instrument.

It is like a horse of pure breed: if it lets itself be directed, then it will win all the races, everywhere it will come first. If it is untamed, it will trample people and cause havoc and break its own legs or back! It is like that. The one thing to know is to which side it will turn. It loves exceptional things—exceptionally bad or exceptionally good, it loves the exceptional. It does not like ordinary life. It becomes dull, it becomes half inert. And if it is shut up in a corner and told: 'Keep quiet there', it will remain there and become more and more like something crumbling away, and finally just like a mummy: there is no more life in it, it is dried up. And one will no longer have the strength to do what one wants to do. One will have fine ideas,

excellent intentions, but one won't have the energy to execute them.

So do not wail if you have a powerful vital, but you must have strong reins and hold them quite firmly. Then things go well." (CWM 5: 253–256)

L—To throw oneself outward when one is in a transitional state of inwardness is painful

1.

"The condition which you feel is one which is very well known in sadhana. It is a sort of passage or transition, a state of inwardness which is growing but not yet completed—at that time to speak or throw oneself outward is painful. What is necessary is to be very quiet and remain within oneself all the time until the movement is completed; one should not speak or only a little and in a low quiet way nor concentrate the mind on outward things. You should also not mind what people say or question; although they are practising sadhana, they know nothing about these conditions and if one becomes quiet or withdrawn they think one must be sad or ill. The Mother did not find you at all like that, sad or ill; it is simply a phase or temporary state in the sadhana that she has experience of and knows very well." (CWSA 30: 223)

M—Pain is present when things are done outside the consciousness of the Lord

1.

"How did Falsehood come? But that's it, it is the unconsciousness of the creation that constitutes the Falsehood of the creation. And as soon as the creation once more becomes conscious of *being* the Lord, Falsehood will cease.

And it's that, isn't it? Everything is difficult, laborious, hard, painful because everything is done outside the consciousness of the Lord. But when He takes possession of His domain once more—or rather when we allow Him to take possession of His domain once more—and when things are done in His consciousness, with His consciousness, everything will become not only easy, but wonderful, glorious—and in an inexpressible Delight." (CWM 10: 204)

N—Effect of pain in knowledge compared with that in ignorance

1.

"*Mother, when the Divine takes upon Himself human suffering...*

Yes…

... does this suffering have the same effect upon Him as upon us? That is, does He feel pain and sorrow as we feel them?

No! I can say, *No*! For, obviously there is an essential difference between a state of ignorance and a state of knowledge. Something painful happens to you, let us say; and in the ignorance this painful thing takes on a particular quality. But if you receive this painful thing in a state of knowledge, it does not have the same effect. Let us take even a material thing, say, a very material blow, a good blow like this (*gesture*). Well, when one is in the ordinary human state of ignorance the blow has its full effect. It depends exclusively on its violence, on what has given the blow and who has received it, you see. But if the same blow is given in the same way and by the same thing to a being who has knowledge instead of ignorance, *instantaneously* the reaction of the body will be such as to make the consequences... reduce the consequences to the minimum…

… Besides, it is very simple to understand, for if the effect were the same, it would have no happy consequence of any kind for the Divine to take upon Himself bad things! Because they would remain just what they are, and the universe would continue to be what it is. It is because He has the power of transforming these obscure vibrations into vibrations of light that He can take everything upon

Himself. Otherwise, not only would this be useless, but it would be impossible, it would be an absurdity." (CWM 6: 286–288)

2.

"For knowledge, when it goes to the root of our troubles, has in itself a marvellous healing-power as it were. As soon as you touch the quick of the trouble, as soon as you, diving down and down, get at what really ails you, the pain disappears as though by a miracle. Unflinching courage to reach true Knowledge is therefore of the very essence of Yoga. No lasting superstructure can be erected except on a solid basis of true Knowledge. The feet must be sure of their ground before the head can hope to kiss the skies." (CWSA 31: 212– 213)

O—Occult power to cut the connection so the brain does not register pain

1.

"There are minor methods [to eliminate pain] and they have smaller results; they are not very easy either, that is, the knowledge of the power to cut the connection between the suffering part and the recording brain. One cuts the connection, then the brain does not register. That's what one does, what the doctors do with anaesthetics. They cut the connection of the nerves between the spot that's ill and

the brain; so the brain no longer perceives anything or it is reduced to a minimum. And it always comes back to the same thing, one way or another; and all this calls for an occult power or a training. Some people have it spontaneously; there are not many of these—very few." (CWM 7: 129)

2.

"The first thing and the most indispensable is to nullify the pain by cutting the connection. You see, one becomes conscious of the pain because it is there.

For example, you have cut your finger, there's a nerve that has been affected, and so the nerve quickly goes to tell the brain, up there, that something has happened which is wrong, here. That is what gives you the pain to awaken your attention, to tell you: "You know, there's something wrong." Then the thought immediately feels anxious: "What is wrong? Oh! How it hurts", etc., etc.—then returns to the finger and tries to arrange what is not yet destroyed. Usually one puts a small bandage. But in order not to have the pain, if it hurts very much, you must quite simply cut the connection by thought, saying to the nerve, 'Now remain quiet, you have done your work, you have warned me, you don't need to say anything any longer; ploff! I am stopping you.' And when you do it well, you suffer no longer, it is finished, you stop the pain

completely. That is the best thing. It is infinitely preferable to telling yourself that it is painful…

…

But my own method which consists in saying to the nerve, 'Now you have done your job, keep quiet, you don't need to tell me anything more', is much better. One cuts it and then it's over.

When one has a very bad toothache (I don't know if you have a toothache sometimes or not; a toothache hurts terribly because the nerve is quite, quite close to the brain, so it doesn't lose its intensity on the way, it is very direct and hurts very much) , the best way—in fact there's no other—the best way is to cut it: 'It is good, you have done your work, you told me that something was wrong there, that's enough, don't move now.' And one cuts, cuts it like this (*gesture*), cuts the connection, it doesn't transmit again. Naturally you must think of something else. If afterwards you start saying, 'Do I still have the pain?...' (*Laughter*)" (CWM 7: 147–148)

3.

"*Sweet Mother,*

Once, in one of Your Wednesday classes, You said that in order not to feel pain one must, so to speak, cut the nerve that conveys this sensation to the brain. How can this be done?

I did not say 'cut the nerve'—that would be a surgical operation! I said, cut the conscious connection with the brain.

It is an occult operation, certainly more difficult than the other for those who don't know how to do it, but less dangerous." (CWM 16: 323)

P—There can be a poignant pain in aspiration

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

This observation is quite correct.

And the question is this:

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

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

As soon as the presence of the psychic consciousness is united with the aspiration, the intensity takes on quite a different character, as if it were filled with the very essence of an inexpressible joy. ...

That is the sure sign of the psychic presence. …

When that [psychic presence] is not there, the aspiration may come from different parts of the being; it may come mainly from the mind or mainly from the vital or even from the physical, or it may come from all the three together—it may come from all kinds of combinations. But in general, for the intensity to be there, the vital must be present. It is the vital which gives the intensity; and as the vital is at the same time the seat of most of the difficulties, obstacles, contradictions, it is the friction between the intensity of the aspiration and the intensity of the difficulty which creates this anguish.

This is no reason to stop one's aspiration." (CWM 8: 248–249)

Q—When you face suffering and pain on the path, widen your consciousness

1.

"*What do you mean by these words: 'When you are in difficulty, widen yourself'?*

I am speaking, of course, of difficulties on the path of yoga, incomprehension, limitations, things like obstacles, which prevent you from advancing. And when I say 'widen yourself', I mean widen your consciousness.

…

But if, when you have to face anguish, suffering, revolt, pain or a feeling of helplessness—whatever it may be, all the things that come to you on the path and which precisely are your difficulties—if physically, that is to say, in your body consciousness, you can have the feeling of widening yourself, one could say of unfolding yourself—you feel as it were all folded up, one fold on another like a piece of cloth which is folded and refolded and folded again—so if you have this feeling that what is holding and strangling you and making you suffer or paralysing your movement, is like a too closely, too tightly folded piece of cloth or like a parcel that is too well-tied, too well-packed, and that slowly, gradually, you undo all the folds and stretch yourself out exactly as one unfolds a piece of cloth or a sheet of paper and spreads it out flat, and you lie flat and make yourself very wide, as wide as possible, spreading yourself out as far as you can, opening yourself and stretching out in an attitude of complete passivity with what I could call 'the face to the light': not curling back upon your difficulty, doubling up on it, shutting it in, so to say, into yourself, but, on the contrary, unfurling yourself as much as you can, as perfectly as you can, putting the

difficulty before the Light—the Light which comes from above—if you do that in all the domains, and even if mentally you don't succeed in doing it—for it is sometimes difficult—if you can imagine yourself doing this *physically*, almost materially, well, when you have finished unfolding yourself and stretching yourself out, you will find that more than three-quarters of the difficulty is gone. And then just a little work of receptivity to the Light and the last quarter will disappear.

This is much easier than struggling against a difficulty with one's thought, for if you begin to discuss with yourself, you will find that there are arguments for and against which are so convincing that it is quite impossible to get out of it without a higher light. Here, you do not struggle against the difficulty, you do not try to convince yourself; ah! you simply stretch out in the Light as though you lay stretched on the sands in the sun. And you let the Light do its work." (CWM 8: 285–287)

R—To look at life as a whole, including the present, the past, and the future, can remove pain

1.

"The only way to make life perfect—I mean here, life on earth, of course—is to look at it from high enough to see it as a whole, not only in its present totality, but in the whole of the past, present and future: what it has been, what it

is and what it will be—one must be able to see everything at once. Because that is the only way to put everything in its place. Nothing can be eliminated, nothing *should* be eliminated, but each thing must be in its place in total harmony with all the rest. And then all these things that seem so 'bad', so 'reprehensible', so 'unacceptable' to the puritan mind, would become movements of delight and freedom in a totally divine life. And then nothing would prevent us from knowing, understanding, feeling and living this wonderful laughter of the Supreme who takes infinite delight in watching Himself live infinitely.

This delight, this wonderful laughter that dissolves every shadow, every pain, every suffering! You only have to go deep enough within yourself to find the inner Sun, to let yourself be flooded by it; and then there is nothing but a cascade of harmonious, luminous, sunlit laughter, which leaves no room for any shadow or pain.

In fact, even the greatest difficulties, even the greatest sorrows, even the greatest physical pain—if you can look at them from that standpoint, from there, you see the unreality of the difficulty, the unreality of the sorrow, the unreality of the pain —and there is nothing but a joyful and luminous vibration.

In fact, this is the most powerful way of dissolving difficulties, overcoming sorrows and removing pain. …

And this Sun, this Sun of divine laughter is at the centre of all things, the truth of all things: we must learn to see it, to feel it, to live it.

And for that, let us avoid people who take life seriously; they are very boring people." (CWM 10: 155–156)

2.

An Aphorism on 'Wonderful laughter of the Supreme who takes infinite delight in watching Himself live infinitely' from the above quotation.

81 – God's laughter is sometimes very coarse and unfit for polite ears; He is not satisfied with being Molière, He must needs also be Aristophanes and Rabelais. [Aphorism] (CWM 10: 154)

[Molière: French author of sophisticated comedies;
Aristophanes: Greek dramatist known for comedies of political satire which makes you think while laughing;
Rabelais: French Renaissance writer for gross robust humor, of grotesque and of bawdy jokes]

XXVII—Overcoming Painful Situations in Ordinary Life

A—Depending on the inner attitude the same contact causes pleasure in one and pain in another

1.

Aphorism 135 – All disease is a means towards some new joy of health, all evil and pain a tuning of Nature for some more intense bliss and good, all death an opening on widest immortality. Why and how this should be so, is God's secret which only the soul purified of egoism can penetrate.

Aphorism 136 – Why is thy mind or thy body in pain? Because thy soul behind the veil wishes for the pain or takes delight in it; but if thou wilt—and perseverest in thy will—thou canst impose the spirit's law of unmixed delight on thy lower members. (CWM 10: 244-245)

2.

Aphorism 137 – There is no iron or ineffugable law that a given contact shall create pain or pleasure; it is the way the soul meets the rush or pressure of Brahman upon the members from outside them that determines either reaction.

It is obvious that the same event or the same contact causes pleasure in one and pain in another, depending on the inner attitude taken by each one.

And this observation leads towards a great realisation; for once one has not only understood but also felt that the Supreme Lord is the originator of all things and one remains constantly in contact with Him, all becomes the action of His Grace and is changed into calm and luminous bliss." (CWM 10: 245)

B—To forget pain people do stupid things, go down in one's consciousness

1.

"When people get a big blow in their life, some misfortune (what men call 'misfortune', there are people who do have misfortunes), the first thing they try to do is to forget it—as though one did not forget quickly enough! And to forget, they do anything whatsoever When there is something painful, they want to distract themselves—what they call distraction, that is, doing stupid things, that is to say, going down in their consciousness, going down a little instead of rising up.... Has something extremely painful happened to you, something very grievous? Do not become stupefied, do not seek forgetfulness, do not go down into the inconscience; you must go to the end and find the light that is behind, the truth, the force and the joy; and for that

you must be strong and refuse to slide down." (CWM 5: 50–51)

2.

"When something is very painful, they try to distract themselves—what they call distracting themselves, that is, doing stupid things, lowering their consciousness instead of raising it. If something extremely painful happens to you, never try to deaden yourself; you must not forget, you must not sink into unconsciousness. Go right to the heart of the pain and there you will find the light, the truth, the strength and the joy which are hidden behind this pain. But for that you must be firm and refuse to let yourself slide." (CWM 12: 75)

3.

"The fact is that one of the two principal occupations of man is to try to forget what is painful to him, and the other is to try to seek amusement in order to escape boredom. These are the two principal occupations of humanity, that is, humanity spends half of its time in doing nothing true." (CWM 4: 205)

C—Life gives blows of pain as one has not put order in life

1.

"And there is another moment when one draws oneself up and is able to see what is there above, and one becomes it; then one looks at the world as though from the top of a very very high mountain and one sees all that is happening below; then one can choose one's way and follow it. That is a more pleasant condition. This then is truly the truth, you are upon earth *for that*, surely. All individual beings and all the little concentrations of consciousness were created to do this work. It is the very reason for existence: to be able to become fully conscious of a certain sum of vibrations representing an individual being and put order there and find one's way and follow it.

And so, as men do not know it and do not do it, life comes and gives them a blow here: 'Oh! that hurts', then a blow there: 'Ah! that's hurting me.' And the thing goes on like that and all the time it is like that. And all the time they are getting pain somewhere. They suffer, they cry, they groan. But it is simply due to that reason, there is no other: it is that they have not done that little work. If, when they were quite young, there had been someone to teach them to do the work and they had done it without losing time, they could have gone through life gloriously and instead of suffering they would have been all-powerful masters of their destiny.

This is not to say that necessarily all things would become pleasant. It is not at all that. But your reaction

towards things becomes the true reaction and instead of suffering, you learn; instead of being miserable, you go forward and progress." (CWM 5: 201)

2.

"*In oneself, there are contradictory wills.*

Yes, many. That is one of the very first discoveries. There is one part which wants things this way; and then at another moment, another way, and a third time, one wants still another thing! Besides, there is even this: something that wants and another which says no. So? But it is exactly that which has to be found if you wish in the least to organise yourself. Why not project yourself upon a screen, as in the cinema, and then look at yourself moving on it? How interesting it is!

This is the first step.

You project yourself on the screen and then observe and see all that is moving there and how it moves and what happens. You make a little diagram, it becomes so interesting then. And then, after a while, when you are quite accustomed to seeing, you can go one step further and take a decision. Or even a still greater step: you organise—arrange, take up all that, put each thing in its place, organise in such a way that you begin to have a straight movement with an inner meaning. And then you become conscious of your direction and are able to say:

'Very well, it will be thus; my life will develop in that way, because that is the logic of my being. Now, I have arranged all that within me, each thing has been put in its place, and so naturally a central orientation is forming. I am following this orientation. One step more and I know what will happen to me for I myself am deciding it....' I do not know, I am telling you this; to me it seemed terribly interesting, the most interesting thing in the world. There was nothing, no other thing that interested me more than that.

This happened to me.... I was five or six or seven years old (at seven the thing became quite serious) and I had a father who loved the circus, and he came and told me: 'Come with me, I am going to the circus on Sunday.' I said: 'No, I am doing something much more interesting than going to the circus!' Or again, young friends invited me to attend a meeting where we were to play together, enjoy together: 'No, I enjoy here much more....' And it was quite sincere. It was not a pose: for me, it was like this, it was true. There was nothing in the world more enjoyable than that.

And I am so convinced that anybody who does it in that way, with the same freshness and sincerity, will obtain most interesting results.... To put all that on a screen in front of yourself and look at what is happening. And the first step is to know all that is happening and then you must not try to shut your eyes when something does not appear pleasant to you! You must keep them wide open

and put each thing in that way before the screen. Then you make quite an interesting discovery. And then the next step is to start telling yourself: 'Since all that is happening within me, why should I not put this thing in this way and then that thing in that way and then this other in this way and thus wouldn't I be doing something logical that has a meaning? Why should I not remove that thing which stands obstructing the way, these conflicting wills? Why? And what does that represent in the being? Why is it there? If it were put there, would it not help instead of harming me?" And so on.

And little by little, little by little, you see clearer and then you see why you are made like that, what is the thing you have got to do—that for which *you are born*. And then, quite naturally, since all is organised for this thing to happen, the path becomes straight and you can say beforehand: 'It is in this way that it will happen.' And when things come from outside to try and upset all that, you are able to say: 'No, I accept this, for it helps; I reject that, for that harms.' And then, after a few years, you curb yourself as you curb a horse: you do whatever you like, in the way you like and you go wherever you like.

It seems to me this is worth the trouble. I believe it is the most interesting thing." (CWM 5: 197–198)

3.

"At first it may take some pains to acquire order. Nothing can be learnt without an effort; nor is it easy to learn to

swim, to row, to do gymnastics; but success comes little by little. In the same way, after a certain time, we can learn to do things in an orderly way without the least difficulty. And more and more, we find disorder painful and disagreeable.

When you first learnt to walk, you often stumbled, you fell, you bumped yourself, you cried. Now you walk without giving it a thought and you run skilfully. Well, the movements of walking and running are a splendid example of the orderly functioning of your nerves, your muscles and all your organs.

Thus order always in the end becomes a habit." (CWM 2: 236)

D—To love means to give oneself without bargaining, but it is rarely practised, and the consequence is painful

1.

"When one gives one's love to another human being, the first mistake one generally makes is to want to be loved by the other person, not in his own way and according to his character, but in one's own way and to satisfy one's desires. This is the number one cause of all human miseries, disappointments and sufferings.

To love means to give oneself without bargaining—otherwise it is not love. But this is rarely understood and

even more rarely practised. And the consequences are painful." (CWM 17: 370)

E—Jealousy is a painful sore spot

1.

"*My jealousy must be destroyed, Sweet Mother! Let me become aware of the jealousy and reject it immediately.*

If you could just understand that what I do is *always for the good of each and every one* and never for the good of a few at the expense of others, you would very soon overcome your jealousy and be delivered from this painful sore spot.

Be convinced that what I do for you is always exactly what you need in order to advance on the way; then all jealousy and envy will disappear." (CWM 17: 26)

F—To avoid painful impressions left by mistakes, man gives justifications

1.

"It would seem that in the ordinary psychological constitution of man, the almost constant function of the mind is to give an acceptable explanation of what goes on in the 'desire being', the vital, the most material parts of the mind and the subtlest parts of the body. There is a kind

of general complicity in all the parts of the being to give an explanation and even a comfortable justification for everything we do, in order to avoid as far as possible the painful impressions left by the mistakes we commit and undesirable movements. For instance, unless one has undergone or taken up a special training, whatever one does, the mind gives itself a favourable enough explanation of it, so that one is not troubled. Only under the pressure of outer reactions or circumstances or movements coming from other people, does one gradually consent to look less favourably at what one is and does, and begins to ask oneself whether things could not be better than they are." (CWM 9: 327)

G—Depression is painful and irrational

1.

"It is a pity that this movement of depression has come back with its painful and irrational circle. It must be thrown away for good: these movements go round in a circular repetitionary way characteristic of these things. It is lent force by the reasonings of the physical mind which are specious but of no value. It is not true of spiritual things that experience must come within a certain number of years or not at all." (CWSA 31: 201)

H—Ill-will of the beings of the vital can make things as painful as possible

1.

"It is quite possible, for indeed it is said that the origin of the insect species is a vital origin, that the fashioners are those of a vital type, that is, beings who not only symbolise but represent and live upon the ill-will in the world. These are very conscious of their ill-will, and it is deliberate. The ill-will of men is usually only a kind of reflection—an imitation or a reflection—of the will of the beings of the vital, a will clearly hostile to creation, a will to make things as painful, as ugly, as sorrowful, as monstrous as possible. It is said that it is these who have created insects, and so the insect species would perhaps be... But they do not wilfully represent evil, you understand, they are moved by an unconscious instinct. They do not do evil intentionally. They do it because it is in their nature. What I call ill-will is truly the will to do evil for the sake of doing evil, destroying for the sake of destroying, harming for harming's sake and taking pleasure in the fact of doing evil." (CWM 5: 147–148)

2.

"I think the Dhammapada speaks here of those who already know what is beautiful and noble and who do evil wilfully, deliberately. For them life becomes terribly painful

indeed. To do persistently what one knows should not be done, is at the cost of all peace, all possible tranquillity, all the well-being that one can have." (CWM 3: 197)

I—In some cases, pain can be partly imaginary

1.

"*I am very much interested in writing and reading stories. Then I forget the pain.*

Which proves that your pain is at least three-fourths imaginary." (CWM 17: 62)

J—When the formations of an excited mind are contradicted, it gets a shock, and this causes it pain

1.

"Yes, your mind gets too excited about things. It makes formations (it thinks forcefully: this must be like that, that must be otherwise, etc.) and unknowingly it clings to its own formations in such a way that when they are contradicted it gets a shock and this gives it pain. It must become calm and develop the habit of remaining quiet." (CWM 16: 182)

K—When one is in great pain and wants to sleep peacefully

1.

"*He wanted to know: when one is in much pain or is very irritated, how can one sleep peacefully?*

This indeed needs a certain yogic power. The best way—and this one is absolute—is to go out of one's body.

When the body is in pain, when one has fever or is ill, you see, or the body is very ill, the only thing to do is to come out of it, to bring out one's vital being. And then, if one is a yogi and knows, one rises just above—so as to see his body; the vital being, if it has come out in a fairly material form, can see the body; one sees his own physical body, and then at that moment, with the consciousness one has and the force one has, one can direct the rays of these forces on the place in the body which is ill. But this of course is the peak, it is the surest way of curing oneself; and if one has the power and the knowledge, it is infallible.

One can cure oneself of anything whatever in a very short time. Only, all this means a great practice, a training of the being. It does not come all at once, you see." (CWM 7: 128–129)

L—Fainting due to intolerable pain

1.

"But in fact when the pain is intolerable and people faint, they do this instinctively. To faint is to go out of one's body.

So some people, who are not too closely tied to their body, when something goes wrong, becomes too painful or is not all right, they faint.

Too great a pain makes you faint away, that is, you go out of your body, you really go out and leave the body very inert; and provided someone is there who has enough knowledge not to shake you like this (*gesture*)to wake you up, it is a means of escape from suffering. Of course, if you have beside you someone who is panic-stricken and sprinkles cold water on your head or shakes you, then the result can be disastrous, but otherwise one can... And little by little, naturally, as there is no longer any consciousness there to record the suffering, it becomes calm, and in almost every case the body becomes motionless enough to be able to rest even in spite of the suffering. It doesn't feel it at all any longer." (CWM 7: 129)

M—Turn the attention away from pain

1.

"But obviously, without going so far, there is one thing that one can try to do: it is not to concentrate on one's pain, to turn the attention away as much as possible, not think at all of one's pain, think as little as possible and above all not be concentrated on it, not to pay attention—'Oh, I'm in pain', then it becomes a little worse; 'Oh, I'm in still greater pain', then it becomes still worse, like that, because one is

concentrated on it; and this is the mistake one always makes: to think, be there, attentive, awaiting the sign of pain; then naturally it comes, it comes increased by the concentration of the attention given to it. That is why, when one is not well the best thing to do is to read or have something read, you see; it depends on the condition one is in. But if one can turn one's attention away, one no longer suffers." (CWM 7: 129–130)

N—The Mother's advice for girls who suffer from pain during periods

1.

"Why are some girls completely run down during their periods and suffer from pain in the lower back and abdomen while others may have slight or no inconvenience at all?

It is a question of temperament and mostly of education. If from her childhood a girl has been accustomed to pay much attention to the slightest uneasiness and to make a big fuss about the smallest inconvenience, then she loses all capacity of endurance and anything becomes the occasion for being pulled down. Especially if the parents themselves get too easily anxious about the reactions of their children. It is wiser to teach a child to be a bit sturdy and enduring than to show much care for these small inconveniences and accidents that cannot always be

avoided in life. An attitude of quiet forbearance is the best one can adopt for oneself and teach to the children.

It is a well-known fact that if you expect some pain you are bound to have it and, once it has come, if you concentrate upon it, then it increases more and more until it becomes what is usually termed as 'unbearable', although with some will and courage there is hardly any pain that one cannot bear." (CWM 12: 293–294)

2.

"*How can a girl overcome her suffering and pain during periods?*

There are some exercises that make the abdomen strong and improve the circulation. These exercises must be done regularly and continued even after the pains have disappeared. For the grown-up girls, this kind of pain comes almost entirely from sexual desires. If we get rid of the desires we get rid of the pain. There are two ways of getting rid of desires; the first one, the usual one, is through satisfaction (or rather what is called so, because there is no such thing as satisfaction in the domain of desire). That means leading the ordinary human-animal life, marriage, children and all the rest of it.

There is, of course, another way, a better way,—control, mastery, transformation; this is more dignified and also more effective." (CWM 12: 294)

3.

"*Will the practice of vigorous types of exercises bring difficulties in child-birth if the girls want to marry and have children afterwards?*

I never came across such a case. On the contrary, women who are trained to strong exercises and have a muscular body go through the ordeal of child-formation and child-birth much more easily and painlessly.

I heard the authentic story of one of these African women who are accustomed to walk for miles carrying heavy loads. She was pregnant and the time of delivery came during one of the day's marches. She sat on the side of the track, under a tree, gave birth to the child, waited for half an hour, then she rose and adding the new-born babe to the former luggage, went on her way quietly, as if nothing had happened. This is a splendid example of what a woman can do when she is in full possession of her health and strength.

Doctors will say that such a thing cannot occur in a civilized world with all the so-called progress that humanity has achieved; but we cannot deny that, from the physical point of view, this is a more happy condition than all the sensitiveness, the sufferings and the complications created by the modern civilisations.

Moreover, usually doctors are more interested in the abnormal cases, and they judge mostly from that point of

view. But for us, it is different; it is from the normal that we can rise to the supernormal, not from the abnormal which is always a sign of perversion and inferiority." (CWM 12: 295–296)

O—Material wealth is powerless to prevent suffering, pain, and sorrow

1.

"Bodily wellbeing does not inevitably bring peace and joy; and poverty is not necessarily a cause of misery, as is shown by the voluntary poverty of the ascetics of all countries and all ages, who found in their destitution the source and condition of a perfect peace and happiness. Whereas on the contrary, the enjoyment of worldly possessions, of all that material wealth can provide in the way of comfort and pleasure and external satisfaction is powerless to prevent one who possesses these things from suffering pain and sorrow." (CWSA 12: 97)

P—You can succeed in removing pain through imagination

1.

"You cannot think powerfully of something without your thought taking a form. But if you were to believe that this

form was physical, that would obviously be an error, yet it really does exist in the mental world.

Imagination is a power of formation. In fact, people who have no imagination are not formative from the mental point of view, they cannot give a concrete power to their thought. Imagination is a very powerful means of action. For instance, if you have a pain somewhere and if you imagine that you are making the pain disappear or are removing it or destroying it—all kinds of images like that—well, you succeed perfectly." (CWM 9: 380)

XXVIII—Pain Should Be Thrown Off With the Same Resolution as the Vital Disturbances

1.

"This inertia, numbness, pain should be thrown off with the same resolution as the vital disturbances." (CWSA 29: 247)

2.

"We are free from grief and pain; for we learn how to harmonise our being with all that touches it and to find in all things action and reaction of the delight of existence." *Thoughts and Glimpses* (CWSA 13: 206)

XXIX—Realisation That Everything Is Sachchidananda Drives Out Grief and Pain

1.

"The world is only a play of his being, knowledge and delight, sat, cit and *ānanda*. Matter itself, you will one day realise, is not material, it is not substance but form of consciousness, *guṇa*, the result of quality of being perceived by sense-knowledge. Solidity itself is only a combination of the *guṇas, saṁhati* and dhṛti, cohesion and permanence, a state of conscious being, nothing else. Matter, life, mind and what is beyond mind, it is all Sri Krishna the Ananta-guna Brahman playing in the world as the Sachchidananda. When we have this realisation, when we dwell in it securely and permanently, all possibilities of grief and sin, fear, delusion, internal strife and pain are driven puissantly from our being. We realise in our experience the truth of the Upanishads,

...

'He who possesses the delight of the Brahman has no fear from anything in the world, 'and that other in the Isha Upanishad,

...

'When all created things become one with a man's self by his getting the knowledge (*vijñāna*), thereafter what

bewilderment can he have or what grief, when in all things he sees their oneness?' The whole world then appears to us in a changed aspect, as an ocean of beauty, good, light, bliss, exultant movement on a basis of eternal strength and peace. We see all things as *śubha, śiva, maṅgala, ānandamaya.* We become one in soul with all beings, *sarvabhūtātma-bhūtātmā*, and, having steadfastly this experience, are able by contact, by oneness, by the reaching out of love, to communicate it to others, so that we become a centre of the radiation of this divine state, *brāhmī sthiti,* throughout our world." (CWSA 13: 77–78)

2.

"The All-Conscious ventured into Ignorance,
The All-Blissful bore to be insensible.
Incarnate in a world of strife and pain,
He puts on joy and sorrow like a robe
And drinks experience like a strengthening wine." (CWSA 33: 66–67)

XXX—Through Concentration, One Can Place Oneself in Infinity and Eternity; Then Even Deep Pain Can Be Swept Away

1.

"There are lots of intellectual ways of widening the consciousness. These I have explained fully in my book. But in any case, when you are bored by something, when something is painful to you or very unpleasant, if you begin to think of the eternity of time and the immensity of space, if you think of all that has gone before and all that will come afterwards, and that this second in eternity is truly just a passing breath, and that it seems so utterly ridiculous to be upset by something which in the eternity of time is... one doesn't even have the time to become aware of it, it has no place, no importance, because, what indeed is a second in eternity? If one can manage to realise that, to... how to put it?... visualise, picture the little person one is, in the little earth where one is, and the tiny second of consciousness which for the moment is hurting you or is unpleasant for you, just this —which in itself is only a second in your existence, and that you yourself have been many things before and will be many more things afterwards, that what affects you now you will have probably completely forgotten in ten years, or if you remember it you will say, 'How did I happen to attach any importance to that?'... if you can realise that first and then

realise your little person which is a second in eternity, not even a second, you know, imperceptible, a fragment of a second in eternity, that the whole world has unfolded before this and will unfold yet, indefinitely—before, behind—and that... well, then suddenly you sense the utter ridiculousness of the importance you attach to what happened to you.... *Truly* you feel... to what an extent it is absurd to attach any importance to one's life, to oneself, and to what happens to you. And in the space of three minutes, if you do this properly, all unpleasantness is swept away. Even a very deep pain can be swept away. Simply a concentration like this, and to place oneself in infinity and eternity. Everything goes away. One comes out of it cleansed. One can get rid of *all* attachments and even, I say, of the deepest sorrows—of everything, in this way—if one knows how to do it in the right way. It immediately takes you out of your little ego." (CWM 6: 345-346)

XXXI—Once the Love for the Divine Is Awakened in the Cells, Even If There Is Pain, the First Movement Is to Offer Themselves, to Give Themselves Spontaneously

1.

"My child... it [power of Love] is here constantly, constantly, whatever the body may be doing—whether seeing people or being busy with itself or sleeping—it is always, always there, conscious, vibrant. … what prevents it generally is that the physical consciousness in most men is very obscure; it is made only of the most material needs, desires, reactions. But what is needed is to awaken in the cells the love for the Divine; it is always so, all the time, and it does not change, does not change any more. It is even *much more* constant than any mental or vital movement; it is like this (*Mother closes both her fists*), it does not move. The cells are all the while like this, in a state of love for the Divine. What is most remarkable in the physical is that once it has learnt a thing it never forgets it. The cells, once they have learnt it, this self-giving, this offering to the Divine, this *need* of self-offering, have learnt it for good; it does not flicker any more. It is constant, twenty-four hours out of twenty-four, without stop and day after day, and there is no change. Even if there be something that is not all right (either a pain or something else), the first movement, yes, it is that, it is to offer itself,

give itself—spontaneously. The higher consciousness does not intervene. It is spontaneous, it is the consciousness contained in the cells." (CWM 11: 189–190)

XXXII—When You Are in the Exclusive Divine Presence, Pain Goes Away

1.

"And these were not at all psychological things, but rather physical sufferings, yes, particularly physical suffering. I have seen it—a physical suffering that lasts, that does not stop, that lasts day and night. And then all of a sudden, instead of being in this state of consciousness, you are in that of this exclusive divine Presence. Pain gone! And it was physical, altogether physical, with a physical reason. Yes, the doctors would say, 'It is because of this, because of that and that', quite a material thing, altogether physical; and pouf! it goes away.... The consciousness changes and back it comes.

If one remains sufficiently long in the true consciousness, the appearance, that is to say, what we call physical 'fact', that itself disappears, not merely the pain.... I feel as though I had touched (there is no mind which understands, thank God!), I had touched the central experience." (CWM 11: 135)

2.

"Without the Divine life is a painful illusion, with the Divine all is bliss." (CWM 14: 15)

XXXIII—By Becoming One-Minded in the Sadhana, One Can Escape from the Painful Circle of Old Hurt Feelings

1.

"All that you have written in this letter is quite correct. It is useless to go through the old kind of reconciliation with *X*—it will only bring back the same futile circle—for he will act in the same way always (until he changes spiritually in the vital and that means a turning away from all vital relations) and you would be flung back into the same reactions. To cut away is the only thing—the best for him, the best for you. As for the feelings excited in him—more hurt self-esteem than anything else—they will fade out of themselves. The first necessity of both is to free yourselves from the old relations and that cannot, it is very clear, be done by going back to any remnant of the old interchange.

For the rest keep to your resolution. Do not discuss him with anybody, do not interest yourself in what he does or does not do; let it be his own concern and the Divine's, not yours. Expect nothing personally from him—you may be sure that your expectations will only be disappointed. His nature is not yours and his mental view of what should or should not be done is quite different—incompatible with yours. By retaining anything of the old feeling you will only invite pain and farther disillusionment—you gain nothing and pay a heavy price for that nothing. It is only by

becoming one-minded in the sadhana that you can escape from this painful circle." (CWSA 35: 709–710)

XXXIV—Turn the Consciousness Upward and the Pain Vanishes

1.

"You may have been told that certain bodily complaints will give you a great deal of pain. Things like that are often said. You then make a formation of fear and keep expecting the pain. And the pain comes even when it need not.

But in case it is there after all, I can tell you one thing. If the consciousness is turned upward, the pain vanishes. If it is turned downward, the pain is felt and even increases. When one experiments with the upward and the downward turnings, one sees that the bodily complaint as such has nothing to do with the pain. The body may suffer very much or not at all, although its condition is exactly the same. It is the turn of the consciousness that makes all the difference.

I say 'turned upward' because to turn towards the Divine is the best method, but what can be said in general is that if the consciousness is turned away from the pain to one's work or anything that interests one, the pain ceases.

And not only the pain but whatever damage there may be in an organ is set right much more easily when the consciousness is taken away from the trouble and one is open to the Divine. There is the Sat aspect of the Divine—the pure supreme Existence above or beyond or behind the

cosmos. If you can keep in contact with it, all physical complaints can be removed." (CWM 15: 144–145)

XXXV—Elimination of Pain by Eliminating the Ego-Determined Reactions

1.

"But how shall we conceive of the elimination of pain from nervous sensation or of death from the life of the body? Yet the rejection of pain is a sovereign instinct of the sensations, the rejection of death a dominant claim inherent in the essence of our vitality. But these things present themselves to our reason as instinctive aspirations, not as realisable potentialities.

… And here potentiality exists; for the mastery of phenomena depends upon a knowledge of their causes and processes and if we know the causes of error, sorrow, pain, death, we may labour with some hope towards their elimination. For knowledge is power and mastery.

… We seek constantly to minimise the causes of error, pain and suffering." (CWSA 21: 62)

2.

"Ego is the factor which determines the reactions of error, sorrow, pain, evil, death; for it gives these values to movements which would otherwise be represented in their right relation to the one Existence, Bliss, Truth and Good. By recovering the right relation we may eliminate the ego-determined reactions, reducing them eventually to their true values; and this recovery can be effected by the right

participation of the individual in the consciousness of the totality and in the consciousness of the transcendent which the totality represents." (CWSA 21: 63)

3.

"Again, because it [ego] is limited in the delight of being, it is unable to lay hold on the secure, self-existent perfect bliss of the spirit or the delight, the Ananda of the universe which keeps the world in motion, but is only able to move in a mixed and shifting succession of pleasures and pains, joys and sorrows, or must take refuge in some conscient inconscience or neutral indifference. The ego mind cannot do otherwise, and the soul which has externalised itself in ego, is subjected to this unsatisfactory, secondary, imperfect, often perverse, troubled or annulled enjoyment of existence; yet all the time the spiritual and universal Ananda is within, in the self, in the spirit, in its secret unity with God and existence. To cast away the chain of ego and go back to free self, immortal spiritual being is the soul's return to its own eternal divinity." (CWSA 24: 681)

4.

"If you want to get rid of the painful inner and physical reactions, you must get rid of their cause in you, the ego of self-esteem, demand and desire. It is only by a complete surrender of yourself, your mind, vital and everything else to the Divine that this ego can go. Your reaction and

accusation of injustice against the Mother shows that you are still clinging to it in some part of you and you should welcome rather than resent anything that gives you a chance of rejecting it still more from your nature." (CWSA 32: 343– 344)

5.

"*Half my being is trying hard to reject the sense of ego, while the ego itself colours all my actions. This contradiction creates an inner pain. Will the ego never be dissolved completely?*

There is nothing to be troubled about. You ought rather to congratulate yourself that you have become conscious. Very few people in this Asram are. They are all ego-centric and they do not realise their ego-centricity. 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)

XXXVI—Immobility Can Cut the Contact Between Pain and the Brain, and Pain Can Disappear

1.

"For example, you see, some people suffer from unbearable toothache. It depends above all... some people are more or less what I call 'coddled' [pampered], that is, unable to resist any pain, to bear it; they immediately say, 'I can't! It is unbearable. I can't bear any more!' Ah, this indeed changes nothing in the circumstances; it does not stop the suffering, because it is not by telling it that you don't want it that you make it go away. But if one can do two things: either bring into oneself—for all nervous suffering, for example—bring into oneself a kind of immobility, as total as possible, on the part which hurts, this has the effect of an anaesthetic. If one succeeds in bringing an inner immobility, an immobility of the inner vibration, at the spot where one is suffering, it has exactly the same effect as an anaesthetic. It cuts off the contact between the place of pain and the brain, and once you have cut the contact, if you can keep this state long enough, the pain will disappear. You must form the habit of doing this. But you have the occasion, all the time, the opportunity to do it: you get a cut, get a knock, you see, one always gets a little hurt somewhere—especially when doing athletics, gymnastics and all that—well, these are opportunities given to us. Instead of sitting there observing

the pain, trying to analyse it, concentrating upon it, which makes it increase indefinitely... There are people who think of something else but it does not last; they think of something else and then suddenly are drawn back to the place that hurts. But if one can do this... You see, since the pain is there, it proves that you are in contact with the nerve that's transmitting the pain, otherwise you wouldn't feel it. Well, once you know that you are in contact, you try to accumulate at that point as much immobility as you can, to stop the vibration of the pain; you will perceive then that it has the effect of a limb which goes to sleep when you are in an awkward position and that all of a sudden... you know, don't you?... and then, when it stops, it begins to vibrate again terribly. Well, you deliberately try this kind of concentration of immobility in the painful nerve; at the painful point you bring as total an immobility as you can. Well, you will see that it works, as I told you, like an anaesthetic: it puts the thing to sleep. And then, if you can add to that a kind of inner peace and a trust that the pain will go away, well, I tell you that it will go.

Of all things, that which is considered the most difficult from the yogic point of view is toothache, because it is very close to the brain. Well, I know that this can be done truly to the extent of not feeling the pain at all; and this does not cure the bad tooth, but there are cases in which one can succeed in killing the painful nerve. Usually in a tooth it is the nerve which has been attacked by the

caries, the disease, and which begins to protest with all its strength. So, if you succeed in establishing this immobility, you prevent it from vibrating, you prevent it from protesting. And what is remarkable is that if you do it fairly constantly, with sufficient perseverance, the sick nerve will die and you will not suffer at all anymore. Because it was that which was suffering and when it is dead it does not suffer any longer." (CWM 6: 406–408)

XXXVII—When in Pain After Immobility, Let There Be an Inner Aspiration to Surrender

1.

"Suppose you have a pain somewhere; the instinct (the instinct of the body, the instinct of the cells) is to shrink and to seek to reject—that is the worst thing, that increases it invariably. Therefore, the first thing to teach the body is to remain immobile, to have no reaction; above all, no shrinking, not even a movement of rejection—a perfect immobility. That is bodily equality.

A perfect immobility.

After the perfect immobility comes the movement of inner aspiration (I always speak of the aspiration of the cells—I use words for what has no word, but there is no other way of expressing it), the surrender, that is to say, the *spontaneous and total* acceptance of the supreme Will (which one does not know). Does the All-Will want things to go this way or that way, that is to say, towards the disintegration of some elements or towards...? And there also, there are infinite shades: there is the passage between two heights (I speak of cellular realisations, do not forget that); I mean one has a certain inner poise, a poise of movement, of life, and it is understood that while passing from one movement to a higher movement, almost always there occurs a descent and then an ascent—it is a transition. Then, does the shock you receive push you

downward to make you rise again or does it push you downward to abandon the old movements?—for there are cellular ways of being that should disappear in order to give place to other ways. There are others that tend to rise upward again with a higher harmony and organisation. This is the second point. And one must wait and see, *without postulating in advance* what should be. Above all, there is the desire—the desire to be at ease, the desire to be in peace, all that—which must absolutely cease, disappear. One must be absolutely without reaction, like this (*gesture with palms open, of motionless offering upward*). And then, when one is like that ('one' means the cells), after a time comes the perception of the category to which the movement belongs, and one has only to follow in order to see whether it is something that has to disappear and be replaced by another thing (which is not known for the moment) or it is something that has to be transformed." (CWM 11: 13–14)

XXXVIII—Pain Is Greatest in the Nerves That Have Strong Spontaneous Receptivity

1.

"As I said, it is in the nerves that the experience is the most painful—naturally, because they are the most sensitive cells, those that have the most acute sensation. But they have a very considerable, very spontaneous, spontaneously strong receptivity—without any effort—to the harmonious physical vibration (which is very rare, but still it exists in some individuals). And this physical vibration, what might be called a physical *force*, a harmonious physical vibration (spontaneously harmonious, without the necessity of a mental vibration, like the vibrations of a flower, for example; there are physical vibrations like that, which carry in themselves a harmonious force)—the nerves are extremely sensitive and receptive to this vibration, which puts them right immediately.

It is very interesting, it explains much, explains many things. A day will come when all this will be explained and put in its place. It is not yet the time to reveal, but it is very interesting." (CWM 11: 20–21)

XXXIX—By Yoga We Can Rise Out of Pain and Grief into Bliss

1.

"By Yoga we can rise out of falsehood into truth, out of weakness into force, out of pain and grief into bliss, out of bondage into freedom, out of death into immortality, out of darkness into light, out of confusion into purity, out of imperfection into perfection, out of self-division into unity, out of Maya into God. All other utilisation of Yoga is for special and fragmentary advantages not always worth pursuing. Only that which aims at possessing the fullness of God is purna Yoga; the sadhaka of the Divine Perfection is the purna Yogin." (CWSA 12: 98)

2.

"*Yoga* means freedom from *dwandwa*. The Yogin is free from the bondage of pleasure and pain, of anger and hatred and attachment, of liking and disliking, because he looks with equal eyes on all. He does not shrink from misfortune or misery, happiness or unhappiness. He rises above the bondage of the body, because no man can give him pleasure or pain, because he has his own source of strength, of delight and happiness. This is the freedom which the Gita says the yoga gives, the freedom which we ordinarily mean by *mukti*. This is the freedom which the Gita promises. He says if you act in *yoga*, you rise above

grief and pain, even above all things. You are free from fear or sin, because you do not act for yourself. You do not act because you will get pleasure, but for the sake of God; that is how you are to reach *yoga*. If you wish to be happy, you must give up all your works to God." (CWSA 8: 51)

3.

"Yoga is therefore no dream, no illusion of mystics. It is known that we can alter the associations of mind and body temporarily and that the mind can alter the conditions of the body partially. Yoga asserts that these things can be done permanently and completely. For the body conquest of disease, pain and material obstructions, for the mind liberation from bondage to past experience and the heavier limitations of space and time, for the heart victory over sin and grief and fear, for the spirit unclouded bliss, strength and illumination, this is the gospel of Yoga, is the goal to which Hinduism points humanity." (CWSA 13: 28)

4.

"Experience must always be the basis of true knowledge, but it must be experience illuminated by true perception, not experience dominated by surface impressions. The experience of the mind which has compassed calm and is able to preserve its tranquillity under the most strenuous assaults of pain, misfortune and evil, is alone worth having *dhīra* , which feels grief and thinks under the influence of

affection and passion, even if it be noble affection and passion, cannot arrive at the *samyag jñānam*, the complete and perfect truth. ... The Yogin sees God in all things, not only in all beings but in all events. He is the flood, He is the earthquake, He is Death that leads to a higher life, He is Pain that prepares us for a higher bliss. This is a thing that cannot be argued; it has to be seen. *Paripaśyanti dhīrāḥ*. And sight is only possible to the calm heart and the unperturbed understanding." (CWSA 13: 61–62)

5.

"The impartial equality of soul of the selfless worker and knower is transformed by the magic touch of divine Love into an all-embracing ecstasy and million-bodied beatitude. All things become bodies and all movements the playings of the divine Beloved in his infinite house of pleasure. Even pain is changed and in their reaction and even in their essence things painful alter; the forms of pain fall away, there are created in their place the forms of Ananda.

This is in its essence the nature of the change of consciousness which turns existence itself into a glorified field of a Divine Love and Ananda. In its essence it begins for the seeker when he passes from the ordinary to the spiritual level and looks with a new heart of luminous vision and feeling on the world and self and others." (CWSA 23: 161)

6.

"The idea of separateness, of limitation with its fruit of desire, internal struggle, disappointment, grief, pain,—this alone is our stumbling block. Abolish it, see God alone everywhere & all difficulty disappears. Nivritti & Pravritti, tyaga & bhoga move harmoniously to the perfect fulfilment of the divine purpose." (CWSA 17: 385)

7.

"Yes, it is so [*that people themselves indirectly choose pain and misery by not turning to the Divine*]. Even there is something in the vital consciousness that would not feel at home if there were no suffering in life. It is the physical that fears and abhors suffering, but the vital takes it as part of the play of life." (CWSA 31: 178)

8.

"It is the incompleteness and weakness of the Consciousness-Force manifested in the mental, vital and physical being, its inability to receive or refuse at will, or, receiving, to assimilate or harmonise the contacts of the universal Energy cast upon it, that is the cause of pain and suffering. In the material realm Nature starts with an entire insensibility, and it is a notable fact that either a comparative insensibility or a deficient sensibility or, more often, a greater endurance and hardness to suffering is found in the beginnings of life, in the animal, in primitive

or less developed man; as the human being grows in evolution, he grows in sensibility and suffers more keenly in mind and life and body. For the growth in consciousness is not sufficiently supported by a growth in force; the body becomes more subtle, more finely capable, but less solidly efficient in its external energy: man has to call in his will, his mental power to dynamise, correct and control his nervous being, force it to the strenuous tasks he demands from his instruments, steel it against suffering and disaster. In the spiritual ascent this power of the consciousness and its will over the instruments, the control of spirit and inner mind over the outer mentality and the nervous being and the body, increases immensely; a tranquil and wide equality of the spirit to all shocks and contacts comes in and becomes the habitual poise, and this can pass from the mind to the vital parts and establish there too an immense and enduring largeness of strength and peace; even in the body this state may form itself and meet inwardly the shocks of grief and pain and all kinds of suffering. Even, a power of willed physical insensibility can intervene or a power of mental separation from all shock and injury can be acquired which shows that the ordinary reactions and the debile submission of the bodily self to the normal habits of response of material Nature are not obligatory or unalterable. Still more significant is the power that comes on the level of spiritual mind or overmind to change the vibrations of pain into vibrations of Ananda:

even if this were to go only up to a certain point, it indicates the possibility of an entire reversal of the ordinary rule of the reacting consciousness; it can be associated too with a power of self-protection that turns away the shocks that are more difficult to transmute or to endure." (CWSA 22: 1024–1025)

9.

"A Force has poured into him [*the seeker of Integral Yoga*] in currents or like a sea, worked in his being and all its members, dissolved, new-made, reshaped, transfigured everywhere. A Bliss has invaded him and shown that it can make suffering and sorrow impossible and turn pain itself into divine pleasure." (CWSA 23: 128)

10.

"A power is in thee that thou knowest not;
Thou art a vessel of the imprisoned spark.
It seeks relief from Time's envelopment,
And while thou shutst it in, the seal is pain:
Bliss is the Godhead's crown, eternal, free,
Unburdened by life's blind mystery of pain:
Pain is the signature of the Ignorance
Attesting the secret god denied by life:
Until life finds him pain can never end.
Calm is self's victory overcoming fate.
Bear; thou shalt find at last thy road to bliss.

Bliss is the secret stuff of all that lives,
Even pain and grief are garbs of world-delight,
It hides behind thy sorrow and thy cry.
Because thy strength is a part and not God's whole,
Because afflicted by the little self
Thy consciousness forgets to be divine
As it walks in the vague penumbra of the flesh
And cannot bear the world's tremendous touch,
Thou criest out and sayst that there is pain.
Indifference, pain and joy, a triple disguise,
Attire of the rapturous Dancer in the ways,
Withhold from thee the body of God's bliss.
Thy spirit's strength shall make thee one with God,
Thy agony shall change to ecstasy,
Indifference deepen into infinity's calm
And joy laugh nude on the peaks of the Absolute." (CWSA 34: 453–454)

11.

"Breaking the Silence with appeal and cry
A hymn of adoration tireless climbed,
A music beat of winged uniting souls,
Then all the woman yearningly replied:
'Thy embrace which rends the living knot of pain,
Thy joy, O Lord, in which all creatures breathe,
Thy magic flowing waters of deep love,

Thy sweetness give to me for earth and men'." (CWSA 34: 697)

12.

All here shall be one day her sweetness' home,
All contraries prepare her harmony;
Towards her our knowledge climbs, our passion gropes;
In her miraculous rapture we shall dwell,
Her clasp shall turn to ecstasy our pain." (CWSA 33: 314)

XL—Union with the Divine Causes Pain to Disappear

1.

Aphorism 422 – There are four stages in the pain God gives to us; when it is only pain; when it is pain that causes pleasure; when it is pain that is pleasure; and when it is purely a fiercer form of delight." (CWM 10: 332)

Aphorism 423 – Even when one has climbed up into those levels of bliss where pain vanishes, it still survives disguised as intolerable ecstasy." (CWM 10: 332)

"*I would like You to explain to me 'the four stages of pain' which Sri Aurobindo speaks of here.*

If Sri Aurobindo is speaking of moral pain, of any kind, I can say from experience that the four stages he mentions correspond to four states of consciousness which are the result of inner development and the degree of union with the divine consciousness which the individual consciousness has achieved. When the union is perfect, there only remains 'a fiercer form of delight'.

If it is the physical pain endured by the body, the experience does not follow such a clearly defined order;

especially because union with the Divine most often causes the pain to disappear.” (CWM 10: 332–333)

2.

“For those who have within them a sincere call for the Divine, however the mind or vital may present difficulties or attacks come or the progress be slow and painful,—even if they fall back or fall away from the path for a time, the psychic always prevails in the end and the Divine Help proves effective. Trust in that and persevere—then the goal is sure. (CWSA 29: 29)

XLI—In Surrender, One Meets Difficulties Without Pain

1.

"The sunlit path can be followed by those who are able to practise surrender, first a central surrender and afterwards a more complete self-giving in all the parts of the being. If they can achieve and preserve the attitude of the central surrender, if they can rely wholly on the Divine and accept cheerfully whatever comes to them from the Divine, then their path becomes sunlit and may even be straightforward and easy. They will not escape all difficulties, no seeker can, but they will be able to meet them without pain and despondency,—as indeed the Gita recommends that Yoga should be practised, *anirviṇṇacetasā,*—trusting in the inner guidance and perceiving it more and more or else in the outer guidance of the Guru. It can also be followed even when one feels no light and no guidance if there is or if one can acquire a bright settled faith and happy bhakti or has the nature of the spiritual optimist and the firm belief or feeling that all that is done by the Divine is done for the best even when we cannot understand his action." (CWSA 31: 685)

XLII—When the Divine Master of the Yoga Takes Up Our Yoga, Pleasure and Pain Will Be Transformed into Delight

1.

"The divine Master of the Yoga, *yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇaḥ*, will then [*after surrender*] himself take up our Yoga and raise us to our utmost possible perfection, not the perfection of any external or mental standard or limiting rule, but vast and comprehensive, to the mind incalculable. …

All must be given as material of that transmutation. … An ineffable Ananda will take up our petty joy and sorrow, our struggling pleasure and pain, cast away their discordances and imperfect rhythms, *sarva-dharm¯an parityajya*, and transform all into its transcendent and universal unimaginable delight." (CWSA 19: 560)

XLIII—Pain or Sorrow Can Awaken the Need for Spiritual Experience

1.

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

The positive need to know the Divine and unite with Him usually comes much later. I say usually; there are exceptions, but usually it is at first a flight from the miseries of life which pushes you towards the spiritual life. Very few people, if they were in a state of perfect inner and outer harmony and nothing unpleasant or painful happened to them, very few people would think of the Divine; they would not concern themselves with Him, they would be content with the half-measures of ordinary things and would not seek for an absolute." (CWM 8: 96–97)

2.

"And usually, most people, even those who have a living soul, seek these relations with the Divine only after they have had the most bitter and disappointing experiences in their search for human relationships.

…

That means much time lost and much wastage of energy; but it would seem that very few people can go straight avoiding all these roundabout ways. Mostly, when they are told that there is a divine Joy and a divine Plenitude which far surpass all they can imagine in ordinary life, they don't believe it; and to believe it they must have, as I said, gone through a painful experience of all that is false, deceptive and disappointing in ordinary relationships.

It is said that example is the best teacher, but in fact there are very few who care to follow an example—especially when the examples are a little too far beyond them. They all want to have their own experience; they have the right to it, but that makes the path interminable [endless]." (CWM 8: 121)

XLIV—Bearing Pain Increases Our Capacity to Bear It

1.

Aphorism 93 – Pain is the touch of our Mother teaching us how to bear and grow in rapture. She has three stages of her schooling, endurance first, next equality of soul, last ecstasy.

"As far as moral things are concerned, this is absolutely obvious, it is indisputable—all moral suffering moulds your character and leads you straight to ecstasy, when you know how to take it. But when it comes to the body…

It is true that doctors have said that if one can teach the body to bear pain, it becomes more and more resilient and less easily disrupted—this is a concrete result. In the case of people who know how to avoid getting completely upset as soon as they have a pain somewhere, who are able to bear it quietly, to keep their balance, it seems that the body's capacity to bear the disorder without going to pieces increases. This is a great achievement. I have asked myself this question from the purely practical, external standpoint and it seems to be like this. Inwardly, I have been told this many times—told and shown by small experiences—that the body can bear much more than we think, if no fear or anxiety is added to the pain. If we eliminate the mental factor, the body, left to itself, has

neither fear nor apprehension nor anxiety about what is going to happen—no anguish—and it can bear a great deal.

The second step is when the body has decided to bear it —you see, it takes the decision to bear it: immediately, the acuteness, what is acute in the pain disappears. I am speaking absolutely materially.

And if you are calm—here, another factor comes in, the need for inner calm—if you have the inner calm, then the pain changes into an almost pleasant sensation—not 'pleasant' in the ordinary sense, but an almost comfortable feeling comes. Again, I am speaking purely physically, materially.

And the last stage, when the cells have faith in the divine Presence and in the sovereign divine Will, when they have this trust that all is for the good, then ecstasy comes—the cells open, like this, become luminous and ecstatic.

That makes four stages—only three are mentioned here.

The last one is probably not within everyone's reach, but the first three are quite evident—I know it is like that. The only thing that used to worry me was that it was not a purely psychological experience and that there was some wear in the body by the fact of enduring suffering. But I have asked doctors and I was told that if the body is taught to bear pain when it is very young, its capacity to endure increases so much that it can really resist disease; that is,

the disease does not follow its normal course, it is arrested. That is precious." (CWM 10: 168–170)

2.

"The degree and amount of pain which mind, life and body can bear is by our human standards considerable; but their capacity for pleasure is very limited and pale in its intensity, low in its degree." (CWSA 12: 207)

XLV—With the Power of Detachment from the Body, the Mind Will Not Be Affected by Pain

1.

"We say then to the mind 'This is a working of Prakriti, this is neither thyself nor myself; stand back from it.' We shall find, if we try, that the mind has this power of detachment and can stand back from the body not only in idea, but in act and as it were physically or rather vitally. This detachment of the mind must be strengthened by a certain attitude of indifference to the things of the body; we must not care essentially about its sleep or its waking, its movement or its rest, its pain or its pleasure, its health or ill-health, its vigour or its fatigue, its comfort or its discomfort, or what it eats or drinks. This does not mean that we shall not keep the body in right order so far as we can; we have not to fall into violent asceticisms or a positive neglect of the physical frame. But we have not either to be affected in mind by hunger or thirst or discomfort or ill-health or attach the importance which the physical and vital man attaches to the things of the body, or indeed any but a quite subordinate and purely instrumental importance." (CWSA 23: 343–344)

2.

"This detachment can be made so normal and carried so far that there will be a kind of division between the mind and the body and the former will observe and experience

the hunger, thirst, pain, fatigue, depression, etc. of the physical being as if they were experiences of some other person with whom it has so close a *rapport* as to be aware of all that is going on within him. This division is a great means, a great step towards mastery; for the mind comes to observe these things first without being overpowered and finally without being at all affected by them, dispassionately, with clear understanding but with perfect detachment. This is the initial liberation of the mental being from servitude to the body; for by right knowledge put steadily into practice liberation comes inevitably." (CWSA 23: 345)

3.

"Detachment, silence, inner peace are certainly indispensable for the spiritual progress—a quiet peace-filled detachment. In that peace the Force must do its work. Attacks of confusion, pains etc.—the one thing to arrive at is to be able to stand back from them, to feel detachment from them, separate and call down the Force to act. Whenever one can do that, the attack, the difficulty after a time retires—or even if it lasts a little cannot disturb what has been gained." (CWSA 29: 127)

4.

"This peace of Nirvana is reached when all the mental consciousness is perfectly controlled and liberated from

desire and remains still in the Self, when, motionless like the light of a lamp in a windless place, it ceases from its restless action, shut in from its outward motion, and by the silence and stillness of the mind the Self is seen within, not disfigured as in the mind, but in the Self, seen, not as it is mistranslated falsely or partially by the mind and represented to us through the ego, but self-perceived by the Self, *svaprakāśa*. Then the soul is satisfied and knows its own true and exceeding bliss, not that untranquil happiness which is the portion of the mind and the senses, but an inner and serene felicity in which it is safe from the mind's perturbations and can no longer fall away from the spiritual truth of its being. Not even the fieriest assault of mental grief can disturb it; for mental grief comes to us from outside, is a reaction to external touches, and this is the inner, the self-existent happiness of those who no longer accept the slavery of the unstable mental reactions to external touches. It is the putting away of the contact with pain, the divorce of the mind's marriage with grief, *duḥkha saṁyoga-viyogam*. The firm winning of this inalienable spiritual bliss is Yoga, it is the divine union; it is the greatest of all gains and the treasure beside which all others lose their value. Therefore is this Yoga to be resolutely practised without yielding to any discouragement by difficulty or failure until the release, until the bliss of Nirvana is secured as an eternal possession." (CWSA 19: 242)

XLVI—By One's Will, the Mental Being Can Overcome the Habitual Nervous Reactions to Eliminate Pain

1.

"In the things of the mind this pure habitual relativity of the reactions of pleasure and pain is not difficult to perceive. The nervous being in us, indeed, is accustomed to a certain fixedness, a false impression of absoluteness in these things. To it victory, success, honour, good fortune of all kinds are pleasant things in themselves, absolutely, and must produce joy as sugar must taste sweet; defeat, failure, disappointment, disgrace, evil fortune of all kinds are unpleasant things in themselves, absolutely, and must produce grief as wormwood must taste bitter. To vary these responses is to it a departure from fact, abnormal and morbid; for the nervous being is a thing enslaved to habit and in itself the means devised by Nature for fixing constancy of reaction, sameness of experience, the settled scheme of man's relations to life. The mental being on the other hand is free, for it is the means she has devised for flexibility and variation, for change and progress; it is subject only so long as it chooses to remain subject, to dwell in one mental habit rather than in another or so long as it allows itself to be dominated by its nervous instrument. It is not bound to be grieved by defeat, disgrace, loss: it can meet these things and all things with

a perfect indifference; it can even meet them with a perfect gladness. Therefore man finds that the more he refuses to be dominated by his nerves and body, the more he draws back from implication of himself in his physical and vital parts, the greater is his freedom. He becomes the master of his own responses to the world's contacts, no longer the slave of external touches." (CWSA 21: 113–114)

2.

"In regard to physical pleasure and pain, it is more difficult to apply the universal truth; for this is the very domain of the nerves and the body, the centre and seat of that in us whose nature is to be dominated by external contact and external pressure. Even here, however, we have glimpses of the truth. We see it in the fact that according to the habit the same physical contact can be either pleasurable or painful, not only to different individuals, but to the same individual under different conditions or at different stages of his development. We see it in the fact that men in periods of great excitement or high exaltation remain physically indifferent to pain or unconscious of pain under contacts which ordinarily would inflict severe torture or suffering. In many cases it is only when the nerves are able to reassert themselves and remind the mentality of its habitual obligation to suffer that the sense of suffering returns. But this return to the habitual obligation is not inevitable; it is only habitual. We see that in the

phenomena of hypnosis not only can the hypnotized subject be successfully forbidden to feel the pain of a wound or puncture when in the abnormal state, but can be prevented with equal success from returning to his habitual reaction of suffering when he is awakened. The reason of this phenomenon is perfectly simple; it is because the hypnotiser suspends the habitual waking consciousness which is the slave of nervous habits and is able to appeal to the subliminal mental being in the depths, the inner mental being who is master, if he wills, of the nerves and the body. But this freedom which is effected by hypnosis abnormally, rapidly, without true possession, by an alien will, may equally be won normally, gradually, with true possession, by one's own will so as to effect partially or completely a victory of the mental being over the habitual nervous reactions of the body." (CWSA 21: 114–115)

3.

"But if and when Mind in man becomes capable of being free, unegoistic, in harmony with all other beings and with the play of the universal forces, the use and office of suffering diminishes, its *raison d'être* must finally cease to be and it can only continue as an atavism of Nature, a habit that has survived its use, a persistence of the lower in the as yet imperfect organisation of the higher. Its eventual elimination must be an essential point in the destined

conquest of the soul over subjection to Matter and egoistic limitation in Mind.

This elimination is possible because pain and pleasure themselves are currents, one imperfect, the other perverse, but still currents of the delight of existence. The reason for this imperfection and this perversion is the self-division of the being in his consciousness by measuring and limiting Maya and in consequence an egoistic and piecemeal instead of a universal reception of contacts by the individual. For the universal soul all things and all contacts of things carry in them an essence of delight best described by the Sanskrit aesthetic term, *rasa*, which means at once sap or essence of a thing and its taste. It is because we do not seek the essence of the thing in its contact with us, but look only to the manner in which it affects our desires and fears, our cravings and shrinkings that grief and pain, imperfect and transient pleasure or indifference, that is to say, blank inability to seize the essence, are the forms taken by the Rasa. If we could be entirely disinterested in mind and heart and impose that detachment on the nervous being, the progressive elimination of these imperfect and perverse forms of Rasa would be possible and the true essential taste of the inalienable delight of existence in all its variations would be within our reach. We attain to something of this capacity for variable but universal delight in the aesthetic reception of things as represented by Art and Poetry, so that we

enjoy there the Rasa or taste of the sorrowful, the terrible, even the horrible or repellent;2 and the reason is because we are detached, disinterested, not thinking of ourselves or of self-defence (*jugupsā*), but only of the thing and its essence. Certainly, this aesthetic reception of contacts is not a precise image or reflection of the pure delight which is supramental and supra-aesthetic; for the latter would eliminate sorrow, terror, horror and disgust with their cause while the former admits them: but it represents partially and imperfectly one stage of the progressive delight of the universal Soul in things in its manifestation and it admits us in one part of our nature to that detachment from egoistic sensation and that universal attitude through which the one Soul sees harmony and beauty where we divided beings experience rather chaos and discord. The full liberation can come to us only by a similar liberation in all our parts, the universal aesthesis, the universal standpoint of knowledge, the universal detachment from all things and yet sympathy with all in our nervous and emotional being." (CWSA 21: 116–117)

XLVII—Dispelling Psychological Pain

1.

"*Sweet Mother,*

Each time I have encountered an obstacle in my life, each time I have been deprived of some happiness —some apparent happiness—a consolation has come immediately to dispel my psychological pain. For something tells me: 'All that happens is done for your own good and is done by the Divine Grace.' Is it good, is it healthy to think like this?

Not only is it right, good and healthy to think like this, but it is an absolutely indispensable attitude if one wants to advance on the spiritual path. As a matter of fact, it is the first step without which one cannot advance at all. That is why I always say: 'Whatever you do, do the *best* you can, and leave the result to the Lord; then your heart will be at peace'." (CWM 16: 277)

XLVIII—Seek Not After Pain, for That Is Not the Divine's Will

1.

Aphorism 502 – Yet, O soul of man, seek not after pain, for that is not His will, seek after His joy only; as for suffering, it will come to thee surely in His providence as often and as much as is needed for thee. Then bear it that thou mayst find out at last its heart of rapture." (CWM 10: 350) Thoughts and Aphorisms (CWSA 12: 493–494)

2.

Aphorism 503 – Neither do thou inflict pain, O man, on thy fellow; God alone has the right to inflict pain; or those have it whom He has commissioned. But deem not fanatically, as did Torquemada, that thou art one of these." (CWM 10: 350) Thoughts and Aphorisms (CWSA 12: 494)
[Torquemada: Torquemada headed an organization which imprisoned, tortured and burned nonbelievers]

3.

"One has to bear pain with fortitude when it comes, but to inflict it watonly on oneself is not spiritual. I am aware of the austerities of the Tapaswis of old, but these, condemned by the Gita as Asuric tapasya, had at least for their motive a mastery over the physical consciousness and

might therefore be called a discipline, but to torture oneself or allow oneself to be tortured either for the joy of it or the beauty of it was not their idea—be it either the victim's joy or the torturer's; for I don't quite know to whom is the fierce sacrifice here supposed to be dedicated. An extremity of pain has nothing in it that is ideal or spiritual." (CWSA 27: 403)

4.

496. "When I found that pain was the reverse side & the training of delight, I sought to heap blows on myself & multiply suffering in all my members; for even God's tortures seemed to me slow & slight & inefficient. Then my Lover had to stay my hand & cry, 'Cease; for my stripes are enough for thee'." Thoughts and Aphorisms (CWSA 12: 493)

5.

"Pain is an experience our nature has to accept when it must, involuntarily as a necessity, an unavoidable incident of universal Nature, or voluntarily as a means to what we seek after, but not a thing desired for its own sake,—except when it is so sought in perversity or with an ardour of enthusiasm in suffering for some touch of fierce pleasure it brings or the intense strength it engenders [produces]." (CWSA 19: 505)

XLIX—The True Object and Condition of Life Is Ananda

1.

"The object and condition of Life is Ananda; …

Pleasure is not Ananda; it is a half-successful attempt to grasp at Ananda by means which ensure a relapse into pain. Therefore it is that pleasure can never be an enduring possession. It is in its nature transient and fugitive. Pain itself is obviously not Ananda; neither is it in itself anything positive, real and necessary. It has only a negative reality. It is a recoil caused by the inability to command pleasure from certain contacts which becomes habitual in our consciousness and, long ingrained in it, deludes us with the appearance of a law. We can rise above transitory pleasure; we can get rid of the possibility of pain.

Pleasure, therefore, cannot be the end & aim of life; for the true object and condition of Life is Ananda and Ananda is something in its nature one, unconditioned and infinite." (CWSA 12: 205)

2.

"It is indeed in the lower vital that there is the main difficulty for the spiritual change of human nature. If that were not there, the rest could be more easily dealt with and there would be no long resistance. The vital pleasure is not a true Ananda, but only a pleasant excitement which cannot abide—that pleasure and grief and pain are always

near to each other and the consciousness passes easily from one to the other. One has to establish peace and quietude there, so that the true psychic and spiritual joy can take the place. It is the touch of the psychic that gives the soothing effect of which you speak." (CWSA 31: 165)

3.

"I have already insisted on the constant relation, as conceived by the Vedic seers, between the Truth and the Bliss or Ananda. It is by the dawning of the true or infinite consciousness in man that he arrives out of this evil dream of pain and suffering, this divided creation into the Bliss, the happy state variously described in Veda by the words *bhadram, mayas* (love and bliss), *svasti* (the good state of existence, right being) and by others less technically used such as *vāryam, rayiḥ, rāyaḥ*. For the Vedic Rishi Truth is the passage and the antechamber, the Bliss of the divine existence is the goal, or else Truth is the foundation, Bliss the supreme result." (CWSA 15:97)

4.

"To know, possess and be the divine being in an animal and egoistic consciousness, to convert our twilit or obscure physical mentality into the plenary supramental illumination, to build peace and a self-existent bliss where there is only a stress of transitory satisfactions besieged by physical pain and emotional suffering, to establish an

infinite freedom in a world which presents itself as a group of mechanical necessities, to discover and realise the immortal life in a body subjected to death and constant mutation,—this is offered to us as the manifestation of God in Matter and the goal of Nature in her terrestrial evolution." (CWSA 21: 4)

5.

"Delight is the secret. Learn of pure delight and thou shalt learn of God." Thoughts and Glimpses (CWSA 13: 203)

6.

"What then was the commencement of the whole matter? Existence that multiplied itself for sheer delight of being and plunged into numberless trillions of forms so that it might find itself innumerably." Thoughts and Glimpses (CWSA 13: 203)

7.

"And what is the middle? Division that strives towards a multiple unity, ignorance that labours towards a flood of varied light, pain that travails towards the touch of an unimaginable ecstasy. For all these things are dark figures and perverse vibrations." Thoughts and Glimpses (CWSA 13: 203–204)

8.

"But what then constitutes this higher or highest existence to which our evolution is tending? … But this knowledge is not a systematised result of mental questionings and reasonings, not a temporary arrangement of conclusions and opinions in the terms of the highest probability, but rather a pure self-existent and self-luminous Truth. And this bliss is not a supreme pleasure of the heart and sensations with the experience of pain and sorrow as its background, but a delight also self-existent and independent of objects and particular experiences, a self-delight which is the very nature, the very stuff, as it were, of a transcendent and infinite existence." (CWSA 23: 16)

9.

"But Delight without detachment would be a very dangerous gift which could very easily be perverted. So, to seek Delight before having acquired detachment does not seem to be very wise. One must first be above all possible opposites: indeed, above pain and pleasure, suffering and happiness, enthusiasm and depression. If one is above all that, then one may safely aspire for Delight." (CWM 8: 327)

L—Ananda, Delight, Supports All Life and Activity

1.

"The Soma wine in the Vedic symbolism is the wine of Immortality, the flowing stream of divine beatitude which wells up out of the secret places of the being and manifests in the triple human system, in the mind, the nervous life, the body. According to the philosophy of the ancient Indian seers Ananda, delight,—the rendering, in the terms of sensation, of the plenitude of divine being,—is that which supports, overtly or secretly, all mortal & immortal life & activity. 'Who could live or breathe,' asks the Taittiriya Upanishad, 'if there were not this ether of Delight in which we have our being?' Human joy & pleasure, even human grief & pain, are only minor terms natural or perverse in an inferior formula of this divine Bliss of being. All strength, all activity, all fullness proceed from this creative principle and are supported by it." (CWSA 14: 360)

2.

"In our ordinary life this truth [*we are the inalienable All-Bliss*] is hidden from us or only dimly glimpsed at times or imperfectly held and conceived. But if we learn to live within, we infallibly awaken to this presence within us which is our more real self, a presence profound, calm, joyous and puissant of which the world is not the master—a presence which, if it is not the Lord Himself, is the

radiation of the Lord within. We are aware of it within supporting and helping the apparent and superficial self and smiling at its pleasures and pains as at the error and passion of a little child. And if we can go back into ourselves and identify ourselves, not with our superficial experience, but with that radiant penumbra of the Divine, we can live in that attitude towards the contacts of the world and, standing back in our entire consciousness from the pleasures and pains of the body, vital being and mind, possess them as experiences whose nature being superficial does not touch or impose itself on our core and real being. In the entirely expressive Sanskrit terms, there is an *ānandamaya* behind the *manomaya*, a vast Bliss-Self behind the limited mental self, and the latter is only a shadowy image and disturbed reflection of the former. The truth of ourselves lies within and not on the surface." (CWSA 21: 112–113)

3.

"When we say that all is a divine manifestation, even that which we call undivine, we mean that in its essentiality all is divine even if the form baffles or repels us. Or, to put it in a formula to which it is easier for our psychological sense of things to give its assent, in all things there is a presence, a primal Reality,—the Self, the Divine, Brahman,—which is for ever pure, perfect, blissful, infinite: its infinity is not affected by the limitations of relative things; its purity is

not stained by our sin and evil; its bliss is not touched by our pain and suffering; its perfection is not impaired by our defects of consciousness, knowledge, will, unity. In certain images of the Upanishads the divine Purusha is described as the one Fire which has entered into all forms and shapes itself according to the form, as the one Sun which illumines all impartially and is not affected by the faults of our seeing." (CWSA 21: 407)

4.

"The world lives in and by Ananda. From Ananda, says the Veda, we were born, by Ananda we live, to Ananda we return, and it adds that no man could even have the strength to draw in his breath and throw it out again if there were not this heaven of Bliss embracing our existence as ether embraces our bodies, nourishing us with its eternal substance and strength and supporting the life and the activity. A world which is essentially a world of bliss—this was the ancient Vedantic vision, the drishti of the Vedic drashta, which differentiates Hinduism in its early virility from the cosmic sorrow of Buddhism and the cosmic disillusionment of Mayavada. But it is possible to fall from this Bliss, not to realise it with the lower nature, in the Apara Prakriti, not to be able to grasp and possess it. Two things are necessary for the fullness of man's bliss,—the fullness of his being and the fullness of his knowledge creating by their union the fullness of his strength in all its

manifestations, viryam, balam, bhrajas, tejas, ojas. For Ananda, Sat & Chit make one reality, and Chit is in its outward working pure force to which our Rishis gave the name of Tapas.” (CWSA 12: 205–206)

LI—Ananda Is the Divine Counterpart of the Lower Emotional and Sensational Being

1.

"Ananda is Beatitude, the bliss of pure conscious existence and energy, as opposed to the life of the sensations and emotions which are at the mercy of the outward touches of Life and Matter and their positive and negative reactions, joy and grief, pleasure and pain. Ananda is the divine counterpart of the lower emotional and sensational being." Isha Upanishad (CWSA 17: 29)

2.

"According to the state of the reflecting mind we may have either purity of self-knowledge or an obscuration and distortion of knowledge in the dualities of truth and error; a pure activity of unegoistic Will or an obscuration and deflection of Will in the dualities of right and wrong action, sin and virtue; a pure state and unmixed play of beatitude or an obscuration and perversion of it in the dualities of right and wrong enjoyment, pleasure and pain, joy and grief." Isha Upanishad (CWSA 17: 35)

3.

"This realisation is the perfect and complete Beatitude, embracing action, but delivered from sorrow and self-delusion." Isha Upanishad (CWSA 17: 38)

4.

"The divine is inalienable self-bliss and inviolable all-bliss; the human is sensation of mind and body seeking for delight, but finding only pleasure, indifference and pain." (CWSA 23: 393)

5.

"… infinite Delight loses itself in the appearance of an insensible Matter and emerges in the appearance of a discordant rhythm of varied pain, pleasure and neutral feeling, …" (CWSA 21: 119)

6.

"What is there new that we have yet to accomplish? Love, for as yet we have only accomplished hatred and self-pleasing; Knowledge, for as yet we have only accomplished error and perception and conceiving; Bliss, for as yet we have only accomplished pleasure and pain and indifference; Power, for as yet we have only accomplished weakness and effort and a defeated victory; Life, for as yet we have only accomplished birth and growth and dying; Unity, for as yet we have only accomplished war and association.

In a word, godhead; to remake ourselves in the divine image." (CWSA 13: 200–201)

7.

"Pain and grief are Nature's reminder to the soul that the pleasure it enjoys is only a feeble hint of the real delight of existence. In each pain and torture of our being is the secret of a flame of rapture compared with which our greatest pleasures are only as dim flickerings. It is this secret which forms the attraction for the soul of the great ordeals, sufferings and fierce experiences of life which the nervous mind in us shuns and abhors." *Thoughts and Glimpses* (CWSA 13: 205)

LII—Delight Becomes Grief and Joy, Pain and Pleasure, Under the Conditions of Mind, Life and Body

1.

"Delight in Ananda is pure, unmixed, one & yet multitudinous. Under the conditions of mind, life & body it becomes divided, limited, confused & misdirected and owing to shocks of unequal forces & uneven distribution of Ananda subject to the duality of positive & negative movements, grief & joy, pain & pleasure. Our business is to dissolve these dualities by breaking down their cause & plunge ourselves into the ocean of divine bliss, one, multitudinous, evenly distributed (sama), which takes delight from all things & recoils painfully from none.

In brief, we have to replace dualities by unity, egoism by divine consciousness, ignorance by divine wisdom, thought by divine knowledge, weakness, struggle & effort by self-contented divine force, pain & false pleasure by divine bliss. This is called in the language of Christ bringing down the kingdom of heaven on earth, or in modern language, realising & effectuating God in the world." (CWSA 12: 101)

2.

"Consciousness in life, throwing off the primal insensibility of a material inanimation and nescience, labours to find itself more and more entirely in the Ignorance which is its

first inevitable formulation; but it achieves at first only a primary mental perception and a vital awareness of self and things, a life perception which in its first forms depends on an internal sensation responsive to the contacts of other life and of Matter. Consciousness labours to manifest as best it can through the inadequacy of sensation its own inherent delight of being; but it can only formulate a partial pain and pleasure. … That integral emergence is the goal of evolving Nature." (CWSA 22: 711)

3.

"In fact, Beauty is Ananda thrown into form—if it casts a shadow of pain, it is because the Divine Bliss which we mean by Ananda is watered down in the dullness of terrestrial consciousness into mere joy or pleasure and also because even that does not last for long and can easily have its opposite as a companion or a reaction. But if the consciousness of earth could be so deepened and strengthened and made so intensively receptive as not only to feel but hold the true Ananda, then the lines of Keats would be altogether true. But for that it would have to acquire first a complete liberation and an abiding peace." (CWSA 27: 700)

4.

"This is what we call evolution which is an evolution of consciousness and an evolution of the Spirit in things and

only outwardly an evolution of species. Thus also, the delight of existence emerges from the original insentience [*lacking consciousness*] first in the contrary forms of pleasure and pain and then has to find itself in the bliss of the Spirit or as it is called in the Upanishads, the bliss of the Brahman." (CWSA 29: 393–394)

LIII—In Sadhana, Spiritual Sacrifice Means an Inner Offering to the Divine, Which Is a Joyful Thing, Not Painful

1.

"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)

2.

"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)

3.

"This profounder idea of the world-wide law is at the heart of the teaching about works given in the Gita; a spiritual union with the Highest by sacrifice, an unreserved self-giving to the Eternal is the core of its doctrine." (CWSA 23: 108)

4.

"But, most often, the sacrifice is done unconsciously, egoistically and without knowledge or acceptance of the true meaning of the great world-rite. It is so that the vast majority of earth creatures do it; and, when it is so done, the individual derives only a mechanical minimum of natural inevitable profit, achieves by it only a slow painful progress limited and tortured by the smallness and

suffering of the ego. Only when the heart, the will and the mind of knowledge associate themselves with the law and gladly follow it, can there come the deep joy and the happy fruitfulness of divine sacrifice." (CWSA 23: 107)

5.

"At first there may have to be a prolonged, often tedious and painful period of preparation and purification of all our being till it is ready and fit for an opening to a greater Truth and Light or to the Divine Influence and Presence. Even when centrally fitted, prepared, open already, it will still be long before all our movements of mind, life and body, all the multiple and conflicting members and elements of our personality consent or, consenting, are able to bear the difficult and exacting process of the transformation. And hardest of all, even if all in us is willing, is the struggle we shall have to carry through against the universal forces attached to the present unstable creation when we seek to make the final supramental conversion and reversal of consciousness by which the Divine Truth must be established in us in its plenitude and not merely what they would more readily permit, an illumined Ignorance.

It is for this that a surrender and submission to That which is beyond us enabling the full and free working of its Power is indispensable. As that self-giving progresses, the work of the sacrifice becomes easier and more powerful and the prevention of the opposing Forces loses much of

its strength, impulsion and substance." (CWSA 23: 132–133)

6.

"But the true essence of sacrifice is not self-immolation, it is self-giving; its object not self-effacement, but self-fulfilment; its method not self-mortification, but a greater life, not self-mutilation, but a transformation of our natural human parts into divine members, not self-torture, but a passage from a lesser satisfaction to a greater Ananda. There is only one thing painful in the beginning to a raw or turbid part of the surface nature; it is the indispensable discipline demanded, the denial necessary for the merging of the incomplete ego. But for that there can be a speedy and enormous compensation in the discovery of a real greater or ultimate completeness in others, in all things, in the cosmic oneness, in the freedom of the transcendent Self and Spirit, in the rapture of the touch of the Divine. Our sacrifice is not a giving without any return or any fruitful acceptance from the other side; it is an interchange between the embodied soul and conscious Nature in us and the eternal Spirit. For even though no return is demanded, yet there is the knowledge deep within us that a marvellous return is inevitable. The soul knows that it does not give itself to God in vain; claiming nothing, it yet receives the infinite riches of the divine Power and Presence." (CWSA 23: 109)

7.

"Unselfishness is usually imagined as the abnegation of self, a painful duty, a 'mortification', something negative, irksome and arduous. That is a Western attitude, not Hindu; the European temperament is dominated by the body and the vital impulses; it undertakes altruism as a duty, a law imposed from outside, a standard of conduct and discipline; it is, in this light, something contrary to man's nature, something against which the whole man is disposed to rebel. That is not the right way to look at it. Unselfishness is not something outside the nature, but in the nature, not negative but positive, not a self-mortification and abnegation but a self-enlargement and self-fulfilment; not a law of duty but a law of self-development, not painful, but pleasurable. It is in the nature, only latent, and has to be evolved from inside, not tacked on from outside. The lion's whelp in the fable who was brought up among sheep, shrank from flesh when it was placed before him, but once he had eaten of it, the lion's instincts awoke and the habits of the sheep had no more delight for him. So it is with man. Selflessness is his true nature, but the gratification of the body and the vital impulses has become his habit, his second or false nature, because he has been accustomed to identify his body & vital impulses with himself. He, a lion, has been brought up to think himself a sheep; he, a god, has been trained to be an animal. But let him once get the taste of his true food,

and the divinity in him awakes; the habits of the animal can please him no longer and he hungers after selflessness and selfless work as a lion hungers after his natural food. Only the feeling has to be evolved as a fulfilment of his nature, not painfully worked up to as a contravention of his nature. The man who regards selflessness as a duty, has not yet learned the alphabet of true altruism; it is the man who feels it as a delight and a natural craving, who has taken the right way to learn. The Hindu outlook here is the true outlook. The Hindu does not call the man who has risen above the gratification of desire a selfless man; he calls him aA mvAn , the selfful man; that man is anA mvAn , that man has not found himself who still clings to the gratification of his body & vital impulses. Read that great drama of self-sacrifice, the Nagananda, and you will feel how different is the Hindu outlook from the Western; there self-sacrifice is not a painful and terrible struggle but a glorious outpouring of the nature, a passionate delight. 'It is only human nature,' we say indulgently of any act of selfishness. But that is an error and thrice an error. It is not human nature, but animal nature; human nature is divine & selfless and the average selfish man is selfish not because of his humanity, but because his humanity is as yet undeveloped & imperfect. Christ, Buddha, these are the perfect men; Tom, Dick & Harry are merely animals slowly shaping into men." (CWSA 17: 185–186)

8.

"Surrender means a free total giving with all the delight of the giving; there is no sense of sacrifice in it. If you have the slightest feeling that you are making a sacrifice, then it is no longer surrender. For it means that you reserve yourself or that you are trying to give, with grudging or with pain and effort, and have not the joy of the gift, perhaps not even the feeling that you are giving." (CWSA 3: 114)

9.

"One can sacrifice only what one holds dear. If one does not cling to it, it is not a sacrifice, it is a gift with all the joy of the giving. Surrender has no value if it is painful, if it is a sacrifice. Surrender must be truly a joyous offering." (CWM 4: 314)

LIV—With Absolute Self-Giving and Self-Forgetfulness in Total Consecration, Suffering and Pain Disappear and Are Replaced by Joy

1.

"What does it matter to you if it takes long? For a much longer time you will have the joy of aspiration, of consecration, of self-giving.

For this is the one true joy. And this joy fades away when there is something egoistic, and because there is a demand–which one calls a need–which is mixed in the consecration. Otherwise the joy never disappears.

This is the first thing one obtains, and the last one realises. And it is the sign of Victory.

So long as you can't be in joy, a constant, calm, peaceful, luminous, invariable joy, well, it means that you have still to work to purify yourself, and sometimes work hard. But this is the sign.

It is with the sense of separation that pain, suffering, misery, ignorance, and all incapacities have come. It is with an absolute self-giving, self-forgetfulness in a total consecration that suffering disappears and is replaced by a joy which nothing can veil.

And only when this joy is established here in this world can it be truly transformed and there be a new life, a new creation, a new realisation. The joy must first be

established in the consciousness and then later the material transformation will take place; but not before.

Truly speaking, it is with the Adversary that suffering came into the world. And it's only joy which can vanquish him, nothing else—vanquish him definitively, finally.

(*Long silence*)

It is Delight which has created, and it is Delight which will accomplish.

(*Silence*)

Note that I am not speaking of what men call joy, which is not even a caricature, which, I think, is a diabolic invention in order to make one lose the way: the joy which comes from pleasure, from forgetfulness, from indifference.

(*Silence*)

I am speaking of a joy which is perfect peace, shadowless light, harmony, total beauty and an irresistible power, that joy which is the divine Presence itself, in its essence, in its Will and its Realisation." (CWM 7: 396–397)

LV—If the Psychic Change Is Complete, Then the Process of Spiritual Transformation Is Painless

1.

"If the spirit could from the first dwell securely on the superior heights and deal with a blank and virgin stuff of mind and matter, a complete spiritual transformation might be rapid, even facile: but the actual process of Nature is more difficult, the logic of her movement more manifold, contorted, winding, comprehensive; she recognises all the data of the task she has set to herself and is not satisfied with a summary triumph over her own complexities. Every part of our being has to be taken in its own nature and character, with all the moulds and writings of the past still there in it: each minutest portion and movement must either be destroyed and replaced if it is unfit, or, if it is capable, transmuted into the truth of the higher being. If the psychic change is complete, this can be done by a painless process, though still the programme must be long and scrupulous and the progress deliberate; but otherwise one has to be satisfied with a partial result or, if one's own scrupulousness of perfection or hunger of the spirit is insatiable, consent to a difficult, often painful and seemingly interminable [ceaseless] action. For ordinarily the consciousness does not rise to the summits except in the highest moments; it remains on the mental level and receives descents from above, sometimes a single descent

of some spiritual power that stays and moulds the being into something predominatingly spiritual, or a succession of descents bringing into it more and more of the spiritual status and dynamis: but unless one can live on the highest height reached, there cannot be the complete or more integral change." (CWSA 22: 948)

LVI—Into the Soul, No Pain or Grief Can Enter

1.

"Hidden in the mortal's heart the Eternal lives:
He lives secret in the chamber of thy soul,
A Light shines there nor pain nor grief can cross." (CWSA 34: 442)

LVII—The Characteristic of Consciousness Is the Emotion of Pleasure in Existence That Outlasts All Pain

1.

"There are three such characteristics which appear rudimentarily the moment consciousness itself appears and seem more and more pronounced as liberated Spirit develops to its highest self-expression. The first of the trio is the impulse of existence, the will to preserve self, to survive and be, not merely temporarily but unendingly. ... The second characteristic of consciousness is the capacity of knowledge or awareness, the Will to know. ... The third characteristic of consciousness is the emotion of pleasure in existence, primarily in one's own, sympathetically in all existence, the Will to enjoy. This is the most powerful and fundamental of emotions,—so powerful as to persistently outlast all the pain and struggle which the hampered existence of Spirit in Matter brings to the personality. Showing itself physically at first in mere sense-pleasure and the clinging to life, it develops psychically in the emotions of love and joy, and culminates spiritually in the delight of our psychical personality in contact with or entering into the impersonal existence of our real and infinite Self." (CWSA 17: 266–267)

2.

"But by entering into the cosmic consciousness we begin to participate in that all-vision and see everything in the values of the Infinite and the One. Limitation itself, ignorance itself change their meaning for us. Ignorance changes into a particularising action of divine knowledge; strength and weakness and incapacity change into a free putting forth and holding back various measures of divine Force; joy and grief, pleasure and pain change into a mastering and a suffering of divine delight; struggle, losing its discords, becomes a balancing of forces and values in the divine harmony. We do not then suffer by the limitations of our mind, life and body; for we no longer live in these, even when we record and accept them, but in the infinity of the Spirit, and these we view in their right value and place and purpose in the manifestation, as degrees of the supreme being, conscious-force and delight of Sachchidananda veiling and manifesting Himself in the cosmos." (CWSA 23: 413–414)

LVIII—Once One Grows into the Consciousness and Power of the Infinite Spirit Within, All Suffering Passes Away into an Immeasurable Delight

1.

"Creation is not to the spirit a trouble and an anguish, but a delight expressed, even though in the entirety of its depths inexpressible, fathomless, endless, inexhaustible. It is only the limited action of mind in the ignorance straining after possession and discovery and unable to find the concealed power of the spirit that makes of the delight of action and creation a passion or suffering: for, limited in capacity and embarrassed by life and body, it has yet desires beyond its capacity, because it is the instrument of a growth and the seed of an illimitable self-expression and it has the pain of the growth and the pain of the obstacle and the pain of the insufficiency of its action and delight. But let this struggling self-creator and doer of works once grow into the consciousness and power of the secret infinite spirit within it and all this passion and suffering passes away into an immeasurable delight of liberated being and its liberated action." (CWSA 13: 356)

2.

"Once this secret and inner Godhead is known and is embraced, the whole being and the whole life will undergo a sovereign uplifting and a marvelous transmutation. In place of the ignorance of the lower Nature absorbed in its

outward works and appearances the eye will open to the vision of God everywhere, to the unity and universality of the spirit. The world's sorrow and pain will disappear in the bliss of the All-blissful; our weakness and error and sin will be changed into the all-embracing and all-transforming strength, truth and purity of the Eternal. To make the mind one with the divine consciousness, to make the whole of our emotional nature one love of God everywhere, to make all our works one sacrifice to the Lord of the worlds and all our worship and aspiration one adoration of him and self-surrender, to direct the whole self Godwards in an entire union is the way to rise out of a mundane into a divine existence. This is the Gita's teaching of divine love and devotion, in which knowledge, works and the heart's longing become one in a supreme unification, a merging of all their divergences, an intertwining of all their threads, a high fusion, a wide identifying movement." (CWSA 19: 336)

3.

"For there is nothing in the world which has not its ultimate truth and support in the Divine. And if you are not stopped by the appearance, physical or moral or aesthetic, but get behind and are in touch with the Spirit, the Divine Soul in things, you can reach beauty and delight even through what affects the ordinary sense only as something poor, painful or discordant." (CWM 3: 27)

LIX—In the Full Manifestation, Pain and Suffering Are Transformed into Ananda

1.

"Ananda is in its every fibre a positive of positives. It affirms and rejoices in all that is native to peace, but it afirms too and rejoices in all that peace negates or regards with a sovereign separateness. Ananda is an all embracing and creative force. There can be in the world's tangle of conflicting forces an Ananda of pain and suffering and in the full manifestation pain and suffering no longer remain themselves but are transformed into Ananda." (CWSA 12: 207)

2.

"In order that this evolution might be, an implacable plunge of supreme Consciousness and Being into an apparent void of insentience [lacking ability to perceive sensation], inconscience, non-existence was inevitable; for without that plunge, immergence, seeming yet effective annihilation [in] its opposite the creation of that phenomenon of cosmic Energy which we call Matter would have been impossible. Yet however effective this appearance is only an appearance. In the void of that Non-Existence all the powers of being are held involved and latent; in the impenetrable darkness of that Inconscience all the possibilities of consciousness lie ready to be evolved;

in that insentience is a drowned Delight of Existence which emerging in the contradictory figures of pleasure and pain can struggle upwards towards cosmic expression of its own truth of the Bliss that supports all things." (CWSA 12: 224)

3.

"This then must be our will in terrestrial existence—being mind in matter to grow into the Spirit, being man-animal to emerge into the Godhead, to expand out of our limited sense of existence into freedom and infinite wideness, out of the half figure of consciousness we have realised to be illumined into true consciousness, out of weakness to realise divine Mastery, out of the dual experience of pain and pleasure to emerge into possession of the cosmic Bliss of existence, out of the dull chrysalis of our limited selves to flower into oneness with the Divine Self that we are. For this is not an egoistic will in us but the meaning of the Divine Inhabitant for which he has undertaken bodily life and terrestrial existence." (CWSA 12: 225)

4.

"The term of our destiny is already known to us; we have to grow from what we are into a more luminous existence, from pleasure and pain into a purer and vaster and deeper bliss, from our struggling knowledge and ignorance into a spontaneous and boundless light of consciousness, from our fumbling strength and weakness into a sure and all-

understanding Power, from division and ego into universality and unity. There is an evolution and we have to complete it: a human animality or an animal humanity is not enough. We must pass from the inadequate figure of humanity into a figure of the Godhead, from mind to supermind, from the consciousness of the finite to the consciousness of the Infinite, from Nature into Supernature." (CWSA 12: 228)

5.

"The nature of the Self in a state of Vidya is bliss; now the state of Vidya is a state of self-realisation, the realisation of oneness & universality. The nature of the Self in the state of Avidya, the false sense of diversity and limitation is a state not of pure bliss but of pleasure & pain, for pleasure is different from bliss, as it is limited & involves pain, while the nature of bliss is illimitable and above duality; it is when pain itself becomes pleasure, is swallowed up in pleasure, that bliss is born. Every thing therefore which removes even partially the sense of difference and helps towards the final unity, brings with it a touch of bliss by a partial oblivion of pain. But that which brings you bliss, you cannot help but delight in ecstatically, you cannot help but *love*. If therefore you see yourself in another, you spontaneously love that other; for in yourself you must delight. If you see yourself in all creatures, you cannot but love all creatures. Universal love is the

inevitable consequence of the realisation of the One in Many, and with Universal Love how shall any shred of hate, disgust, dislike, loathing coexist?" (CWSA 17: 137)

6.

""Lastly, to be fully is to have the full delight of being. Being without delight of being, without an entire delight of itself and all things is something neutral or diminished; it is existence, but it is not fullness of being. This delight too must be intrinsic, self-existent, automatic; it cannot be dependent on things outside itself: whatever it delights in, it makes part of itself, has the joy of it as part of its universality. All undelight, all pain and suffering are a sign of imperfection, of incompleteness; they arise from a division of being, an incompleteness of consciousness of being, an incompleteness of the force of being. To become complete in being, in consciousness of being, in force of being, in delight of being and to live in this integrated completeness is the divine living." (CWSA 22: 1061)

7.

"A peace and bliss inconceivable to the pleasure-bound and pain-racked mind, and immeasurable by the limited capacities of our present bodily sense, is the reward of the seeker's insistent self-discipline, his painful struggle, his untiring endeavour." (CWSA 12: 354)

LX—In the Divine Supramental Gnosis, Pleasure and Pain Disappear in Bliss

1.

"But all this can only constitute a greater inner life with a greater possibility of the outer action and is a transitional achievement; the full transformation can come only by the ascent of the sacrifice to its farthest heights and its action upon life with the power and light and beatitude of the divine supramental Gnosis. For then alone all the forces that are divided and express themselves imperfectly in life and its works are raised to their original unity, harmony, single truth, authentic absoluteness and entire significance. There Knowledge and Will are one, Love and Force a single movement; the opposites that afflict us here are resolved into their reconciled unity: good develops its absolute and evil divesting itself of its error returns to the good that was behind it; sin and virtue vanish in a divine purity and an infallible truth-movement; the dubious evanescence of pleasure disappears in a Bliss that is the play of an eternal and happy spiritual certitude, and pain in perishing discovers the touch of an Ananda which was betrayed by some dark perversion and incapacity of the will of the Inconscient to receive it." (CWSA 23: 184–185)

2.

"Our direct truth-perceptions on the other hand come from that Supermind,—a Will that knows and a Knowledge that effects,—which creates universal order out of infinity. … It reveals the delight for which each of our sensations and emotions is groping and from which they fall back in movements of partially grasped satisfaction or of dissatisfaction, pain, grief or indifference, and makes each take its place in the unity of the universal delight behind; thus it can transform the conflict of our dualised emotions and sensations into a certain totality of serene, yet profound and powerful love and delight. … Uplifted into this supramental light, pain and pleasure and indifference begin to be converted into joy of the one self-existent Delight; strength and weakness, success and failure turn into powers of the one self-effective Force and Will; truth and error, knowledge and ignorance change into light of the one infinite self-awareness and universal knowledge; increase of being and diminution of being, limitation and the overcoming of limitation are transfigured into waves of the one self-realising conscious existence. All our life as well as all our essential being is transformed into the possession of Sachchidananda." (CWSA 23: 423–424)

3.

"And what will be the bliss nature when it manifests in a new supramental race? The fully evolved soul will be one

with all beings in the status and dynamic effects of experience of a bliss-consciousness intense and illimitable. And since love is the effective power and soul-symbol of bliss-oneness he will approach and enter into this oneness by the gate of universal love, a sublimation of human love at first, a divine love afterwards, at its summits a thing of beauty, sweetness and splendor now to us inconceivable. He will be one in bliss-consciousness with all the world-play and its powers and happenings and there will be banished forever the sorrow and fear, the hunger and pain of our poor and darkened mental and vital and physical existence." (CWSA 23: 509)

4.

"In Supermind is the integrating Light, the consummating Force, the wide entry into the supreme Ananda: the psychic being uplifted by that Light and Force can unite itself with the original Delight of existence from which it came: overcoming the dualities of pain and pleasure, delivering from all fear and shrinking the mind, life and body, it can recast the contacts of existence in the world into terms of the Divine Ananda." (CWSA 21: 244)

5.

"… when the supramental light takes possession of mind and heart, then there can be no trouble, grief or disturbance; for that brings with it a spiritual nature of

illumined strength in which these things can have no place. There the only vibrations and emotions are those which belong to the *ānandamaya* nature of divine unity.

The calm established in the whole being must remain the same whatever happens, in health and disease, in pleasure and in pain, even in the strongest physical pain, in good fortune and misfortune, our own or that of those we love, in success and failure, honour and insult, praise and blame, justice done to us or injustice, everything that ordinarily affects the mind." (CWSA 24: 723–724)

6.

"But at the same time the beginning of a supramental creation on earth is bound to have a powerful effect on the rest of terrestrial existence. … For at present the grades of consciousness between mind and supermind act only as influences (the highest of them very indirect influences) on human mind and consciousness and cannot do more. This would change. An organized higher human consciousness could appear or several degrees of it, with the supermind-organised consciousness as the leader at the top influencing the others and drawing them towards itself. It is likely that as the supramental principle evolved itself the evolution would more and more take on another aspect—the Daivic nature would predominate, the Asuro-Rakshaso-Pishachic prakriti which now holds so large a place would more and more recede and lose its power. A principle of

greater unity, harmony and light would emerge everywhere. It is not that the creation in the Ignorance would be altogether abolished, but it would begin to lose much of its elements of pain and falsehood and would be more a progression from lesser to higher Truth, from a lesser to a higher harmony, from a lesser to a higher Light, than the reign of chaos and struggle, of darkness and error that we now perceive. For according to all occult teaching the evolutionary creation could have been such but for the intervention of the Powers of Darkness—all traditions including that of the Veda and Upanishads point under different figures to the same thing. In the Upanishads it is the Daityas that smite with evil all that the gods create, in the Zoroastrian tradition it is Ahriman coming across the work of Ahura Mazda, the Chaldean tradition uses a different figure. But the significance is the same; it is the perception of something that has struck across the harmonious development of creation and brought in the principle of darkness and disorder." (CWSA 28: 282–283)

7.

"The change of the consciousness is the necessary thing and without it there can be no physical siddhi. But the fullness of the supramental change is not possible if the body remains as it is, a slave of death, disease, decay, pain, unconsciousness and all the other results of the ignorance. If these are to remain the descent of the supramental is

hardly necessary—for a change of consciousness which would bring mental-spiritual union with the Divine, the Overmind is sufficient, even the Higher Mind is sufficient. The supramental descent is necessary for a dynamic action of the Truth in mind, vital and body. This would imply as a final result the disappearance of the unconsciousness of the body; it would no longer be subject to decay and disease." (CWSA 28: 310)

8.

"Only the appearance of a new force and light and power accompanying the descent of the supramental consciousness into this world can raise man out of the anguish and pain and misery in which he is submerged. For only the supramental consciousness bringing down upon earth a higher poise and a purer and truer light can achieve the great miracle of transformation." (CWM 12: 98)

9.

"As yet thought only some high spirit's dream
Or a vexed illusion in man's toiling mind,
A new creation from the old shall rise,
A Knowledge inarticulate find speech,
Beauty suppressed burst into paradise bloom,
Pleasure and pain dive into absolute bliss." (CWSA 33: 330)

LXI—How the Lover of Nature, the Artist, the Poet, the Seeker of Knowledge, the Musician, and the God-Lover Transform Egoistic Pleasure and Pain into Delight

1.

"In the view of old philosophies pleasure and pain are inseparable like intellectual truth and falsehood and power and incapacity and birth and death; therefore the only possible escape from them would be a total indifference, a blank response to the excitations of the world-self. But a subtler psychological knowledge shows us that this view which is based on the surface facts of existence only, does not really exhaust the possibilities of the problem. It is possible by bringing the real soul to the surface to replace the egoistic standards of pleasure and pain by an equal, an all-embracing personal-impersonal delight. The lover of Nature does this when he takes joy in all the things of Nature universally without admitting repulsion or fear or mere liking and disliking, perceiving beauty in that which seems to others mean and insignificant, bare and savage, terrible and repellent. The artist and the poet do it when they seek the *rasa* of the universal from the aesthetic emotion or from the physical line or from the mental form of beauty or from the inner sense and power alike of that from which the ordinary man turns away and of that to which he is attached by a sense of pleasure. The seeker of

knowledge, the God-lover who finds the object of his love everywhere, the spiritual man, the intellectual, the sensuous, the aesthetic all do this in their own fashion and must do it if they would find embracingly the Knowledge, the Beauty, the Joy or the Divinity which they seek. It is only in the parts where the little ego is usually too strong for us, it is only in our emotional or physical joy and suffering, our pleasure and pain of life, before which the desire-soul in us is utterly weak and cowardly, that the application of the divine principle becomes supremely difficult and seems to many impossible or even monstrous and repellent. Here the ignorance of the ego shrinks from the principle of impersonality which it yet applies without too much difficulty in Science, in Art and even in a certain kind of imperfect spiritual living because there the rule of impersonality does not attack those desires cherished by the surface soul and those values of desire fixed by the surface mind in which our outward life is most vitally interested. In the freer and higher movements there is demanded of us only a limited and specialised equality and impersonality proper to a particular field of consciousness and activity while the egoistic basis of our practical life remains to us; in the lower movements the whole foundation of our life has to be changed in order to make room for impersonality, and this the desire-soul finds impossible." (CWSA 21: 237–238)

2.

"This deeper spiritual feeling, this Ananda is the fountain of poetic delight and beauty. It springs from a supreme essence of experience, a supreme aesthesis which is in its own nature spiritual, impersonal, independent of the personal reactions and passions of the mind, and that is why the poet is able to transmute pain and sorrow and the most tragic and terrible and ugly things into forms of poetic beauty, because of this impersonal joy of the spirit in all experience, whatever its nature. And as, therefore, the subject of the poet is all that he can feel of the infinite life of the spirit that creates in existence and all that he can seize of the infinite truth of God and Nature and our own and the world's being, so too what he brings out from his subject is all that he can pour into speech of his vision of eternal and universal beauty, all that he can express of the soul's universal delight in existence." (CWSA 26: 259)

3.

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

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

There are different depths in these shocks. They are not all on the same plane. Usually people receive emotional

or sentimental shocks altogether superficially, and that is why they weep, they cry, they... sometimes gesticulate. Anyway, these are shocks in the outer crust. But there is a greater depth where usually you receive silently, but which awakens in you a creative vibration and a need to formulate. Then, if one is a poet he writes poetry, if one is a musician he composes music, if one is a writer he writes a story, and if one is a philosopher he expresses his state, describes his state.

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

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

4.

"*Regarding the film we saw, what is the place of suffering in artistic creation?*

The film?

We saw that through suffering...

Oh,oh, oh, oh!... the film about Berlioz?

His music matured through suffering...

Yes, yes, so what place...? Where does it come from?

Suffering—how does it help artistic creation?

How does it help? That depends on people. Some people are very powerfully helped by it. I consider that man one of the purest expressions of music. It is almost... I could say that he is an incarnation of music, of the spirit of music. Unfortunately his body was a little frail; that is, he did not have that solid base which yoga gives, for instance. So this shook him up too much, and made him too emotional, nervous, agitated, emotive. You see, it was a serious weakness. But from the point of view of creation, I have always felt—and the other day it was very strong—that truly he was in contact with the spirit of music, you know, the very meaning of music, and that this entered into him with such a force that it shook him up; but truly, truly he was like an incarnation of music.

The notion that it was suffering that made him create is purely human; it is not true. What, on the contrary, is very remarkable is—to turn the thing around—that there was no physical pain which was not instantaneously

translated into music in him; that is, the spirit of music was much stronger than human pain, and each blow which he received from life—and as he was indeed too sensitive to have the power of resisting, he was shaken—all the same, instantly, it was translated into music. It is something very rare.

People—all creators—usually require a little... how shall I put it?... time and quietness to be able to begin creating again, while with him it was spontaneous. The painful blow brought musical expression instantaneously. Truly for him his whole life began with music, finished with music. It was music and it was a... he had such a sincerity and such an exclusive intensity in his attachment to music that I feel that the spirit of music expressed itself through him. Perhaps what he has written is not the *most* beautiful music, because of that kind of weakness of what we call the "*ādhāra*" here. He was... his physical make-up was a little too weak. But from the point of view of music, it is very beautiful, very beautiful. (*Silence*) And even with his power he had a very great simplicity. There is a kind of limpidity of line in what he has written, with a very great technical knowledge, of course. His power of orchestration was very, very remarkable. When one can orchestrate something for six hundred performers, it means a science as complicated as the most complicated mathematics. And in fact they come very close." (CWM 6: 379–380)

5.

"There are vital joys that are innocent and need not be seriously put down—such as joy in art, poetry, literature. They have to be not put down, but put aside only when they interfere with sadhana." (CWSA 31: 177)

LXII—The Ineffable Joy of Love Can Sweep Away From the Universe the Burning Pain of Separation from the Divine

1.

"Moreover, it is a well-known fact that one grows into the likeness of what one loves. Therefore if you want to be like the Divine, love Him alone. Only one who has known the ecstasy of the exchange of love with the Divine can know how insipid and dull and feeble any other exchange is in comparison. And even if the most austere discipline is required to arrive at this exchange, nothing is too hard, too long or too severe in order to achieve it, for it surpasses all expression.

This is the marvellous state we want to realise on earth; it is this which will have the power to transform the world and make it a habitation worthy of the Divine Presence. Then will pure and true love be able to incarnate in a body that will no longer be a disguise and a veil for it.

…

And yet man already knows, at first obscurely, but more and more clearly as he draws nearer to perfection, that love alone can put an end to the suffering of the world; only the ineffable joy of love in its essence can sweep away from the universe the burning pain of separation. For only in the ecstasy of the supreme union will creation discover its purpose and its fulfilment.

That is why no effort is too arduous, no austerity too rigorous if it can illumine, purify, perfect and transform the physical substance so that it may no longer conceal the Divine when he takes on an outer form in Matter. For then this marvelous tenderness will be able to express itself freely in the world, the divine love which has the power of changing life into a paradise of sweet joy." (CWM 12: 69–70)

LXIII— The Psychic Being Delights Equally in All Its Experiences of Pleasure, Pain, and Indifference, Drawing Strength from and Growing Through All That Touches It

1.

"The superficial in us is the small and egoistic, the subliminal is in touch with the universal. So our subliminal or true psychic being is open to the universal delight of things, the superficial desire-soul is shut off from it. It feels the outward touches of things, not their essence and therefore not their *rasa* or true touch; and because it cannot reach the universal world-soul, it cannot find its own true soul which is one with the world-soul.—The desire-soul returns the triple response of pleasure, pain and indifference, but the psychic being behind it has the equal delight of all of its experiences; it compels the desire-soul to more and more experience and to a change of its values. By bringing this soul to the surface we can overcome the duality of pleasure and pain, as is actually done in certain directions of experience by the artist, Nature-lover, God-lover, etc. each in his own fashion. But the difficulty is to do it in the desire-soul at its centre where it comes into contact with practical living; for here the human mind shrinks from the application of the principle of equality.—To bring this subliminal soul to the surface is not

enough; for it is open passively to the world-soul but cannot possess the world." (CWSA 13: 478)

2.

"Another question occurs. Is pain real or a shadow? The Vedantist believes that the soul is a part of God or one with God Himself, and cannot feel pain or grief, but only *ānanda*, bliss. The *jīva* or soul takes the *rasa*, the delight of the dualities, and it changes to bliss in his nature; but this is veiled by the ignorance and separates the *jīva* in his *svarūpa* from the mind and the heart. Pain is a negative *vikāra* or corruption of true experience in the mind, pleasure a positive *vikāra*. The truth is *ānanda*. But this is a knowledge for which mankind is not ready. Only the Yogin realises it and becomes *sama*, like-minded to pain and pleasure, good or evil, happiness or misfortune. He takes the *rasa* of both and they give him strength and bliss; for the veil between his mind and his soul is removed and the apparent man in him has become one with the *svarūpa* or real man." (CWSA 13: 63)

3.

"All emotion, feeling, sensation is a way of the soul meeting and putting effective values on the manifestations of the Self in nature. But what the self feels is a universal delight, Ananda. The soul in the lower mind on the contrary gives

it, as we have seen, three varying values of pain, pleasure and neutral indifference, which tone by gradations of less and more into each other, and this gradation depends on the power of the individualised consciousness to meet, sense, assimilate, equate, master all that comes in on it from all of the greater self which it has by separative individualisation put outside of it and made as if not self to its experience. But all the time, because of the greater Self within us, there is a secret soul which takes delight in all these things and draws strength from and grows by all that touches it, profits as much by adverse as by favourable experience. This can make itself felt by the outer desire soul, and that in fact is why we have a delight in existing and can even take a certain kind of pleasure in struggle, suffering and the harsher colours of existence. But to get the universal Ananda all our instruments must learn to take not any partial or perverse, but the essential joy of all things. In all things there is a principle of Ananda, which the understanding can seize on and the aesthesis feel as the taste of delight in them, their *rasa*; but ordinarily they put upon them instead arbitrary, unequal and contrary values: they have to be led to perceive things in the light of the spirit and to transform these provisional values into the real, the equal and essential, the spiritual *rasa*." (CWSA 24: 716–717)

4.

136. "Why is thy mind or thy body in pain? Because thy soul behind the veil wishes for the pain or takes delight in it; but if thou wilt—and perseverest in thy will—thou canst impose the spirit's law of unmixed delight on thy lower members." Thoughts and Aphorisms (CWSA 12: 439)

5.

"The subliminal soul is conscious inwardly of the *rasa* of things and has an equal delight in all contacts; it is conscious also of the values and standards of the surface desire-soul and receives on its own surface corresponding touches of pleasure, pain and indifference, but takes an equal delight in all. In other words, our real soul within takes joy of all its experiences, gathers from them strength, pleasure and knowledge, grows by them in its store and its plenty. It is this real soul in us which compels the shrinking desire-mind to bear and even to seek and find a pleasure in what is painful to it, to reject what is pleasant to it, to modify or even reverse its values, to equalise things in indifference or to equalise them in joy, the joy of the variety of existence. And this it does because it is impelled by the universal to develop itself by all kinds of experience so as to grow in Nature. Otherwise, if we lived only by the surface desire-soul, we could no more change or advance than the plant or stone in whose immobility or in whose

routine of existence, because life is not superficially conscious, the secret soul of things has as yet no instrument by which it can rescue the life out of the fixed and narrow gamut into which it is born. The desire-soul left to itself would circle in the same grooves for ever." (CWSA 21: 236–237)

6.

Aphorism 524 – A healthy mind hates pain; for the desire of pain that men sometimes develop in their minds is morbid and contrary to Nature. But the soul cares not for the mind and its sufferings any more than the iron-master for the pain of the ore in the furnace; it follows its own necessities and its own hunger." (CWM 10: 357)

LXIV—Our Secret Soul Takes Pleasure in Strife and Even in Suffering

1.

"Our secret soul takes a pleasure in this strife and effort, and even a pleasure in adversity and suffering, which can be complete enough in memory and retrospect, but is present too behind at the time and often even rises to the surface of the afflicted mind to support it in its passion; but what really attracts the soul is the whole mingled weft of the thing we call life with all its disturbance of struggle and seeking, its attractions and repulsions, its offer and its menace, its varieties of every kind. To the rajasic desire-soul in us a monotonous pleasure, success without struggle, joy without a shadow must after a time become fatiguing, insipid, cloying; it needs a background of darkness to give full value to its enjoyment of light: for the happiness it seeks and enjoys is of that very nature, it is in its very essence relative and dependent on the perception and experience of its opposite. The joy of the soul in the dualities is the secret of the mind's pleasure in living." (CWSA 19: 191–192)

2.

"The ordinary human soul takes a pleasure in the customary disturbances of its nature-life; it is because it has this pleasure and because, having it, it gives a sanction

to the troubled play of the lower nature that the play continues perpetually; for the Prakriti does nothing except for the pleasure and with the sanction of its lover and enjoyer, the Purusha. We do not recognise this truth because under the actual stroke of the adverse disturbance, smitten by grief, pain, discomfort, misfortune, failure, defeat, blame, dishonour, the mind shrinks back from the blow, while it leaps eagerly to the embrace of the opposite and pleasurable disturbances, joy, pleasure, satisfactions of all kinds, prosperity, success, victory, glory, praise; but this does not alter the truth of the soul's pleasure in life which remains constant behind the dualities of the mind. The warrior does not feel physical pleasure in his wounds or find mental satisfaction in his defeats; but he has a complete delight in the godhead of battle which brings to him defeat and wounds as well as the joy of victory, and he accepts the chances of the former and the hope of the latter as part of the mingled weft of war, the thing which the delight in him pursues. Even, wounds bring him a joy and pride in memory, complete when the pain of them has passed, but often enough present even while it is there and actually fed by the pain. Defeat keeps for him the joy and pride of indomitable resistance to a superior adversary, or, if he is of a baser kind, the passions of hatred and revenge which also have their darker and crueller pleasures. So it is with the pleasure of the soul in the normal play of our life." (CWSA 19: 190–191)

3.

"In all that is developed by the life-force there is developed at the same time a secret delight somewhere in the being, a delight in good and a delight in evil, a delight in truth and a delight in falsehood, a delight in life and an attraction to death, a delight in pleasure and a delight in pain, in one's own suffering and the suffering of others, but also in one's own joy and happiness and good and the joy and happiness and good of others." (CWSA 21: 645)

4.

"Many take a joy in pain and suffering when associated with struggle or endeavour or adventure, but that is more because of the exhilaration and excitement of the struggle than because of suffering for its own sake. There is, however, something in the vital which takes joy in the whole of life, its dark as well as its bright sides. There is also something perverse in the vital which takes a kind of dramatic pleasure in its own misery and tragedy, even in degradation or in illness." (CWSA 31: 204)

LXV—Obey the Voice of the Soul, Even if It Causes Pain

1.

"And as I was saying a little while ago, they [mind and vital] make so much noise that you do not even hear the tiny voice or the tiny, very quiet indication of the soul which says, 'Don't do it.'

This 'Don't do it' comes often, but you discard it as something which has no power and follow your impulsive destiny. But if you are truly sincere in your will to find and live the truth, then you learn to listen better and better, you learn to discriminate more and more, and even if it costs you an effort, even if it causes you pain, you learn to obey. And even if you have obeyed only once, it is a powerful help, a considerable progress on the path towards the discrimination between what is and what is not the soul. With this discrimination and the necessary sincerity you are sure to reach the goal." (CWM 10: 25)

LXVI—The Sorrow the Psychic Feels Occurs When the Divine Is Rejected

1.

"The sadness you speak of is not psychic—for 'painful longing' belongs to the vital, not to the psychic. The psychic never feels a sadness from disappointed desire, because that is not in its nature; the sorrow it sometimes feels is when it sees the Divine rejected or the mental, vital, physical in man or in nature turning away from the Truth to follow perversion, darkness or ignorance. However, with the reign of the Supramental even the vital external nature is bound to change and therefore there will be no chance of any feelings of this character." (CWSA 31: 378)

2.

"The psychic does not suffer like the vital or body, it has not pain or anguish or despair; but it has a psychic sorrow which is different from these things. It has a kind of quiet sweet sadness of yearning which it feels when things go against the Divine, when the obscurity and obstacles are too heavy, when the mind, vital and physical follow after other things, when evil and falsehood and darkness seem to be too strong for the Light. It does not despair, but feels that these things ought not to be and the psychic yearning for it to be otherwise becomes so intense that it is felt as if something akin to sadness." (CWSA 28: 108)

3.

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

LXVII—The Seekers of the Divine Seek Something So Precious and Supreme That a Whole Lifetime of Painful Effort Is Nothing

1.

"I hope however that you will get over this attack and see things one day as all the past seekers of the Divine have seen it, viz. that what one seeks is so precious and such a supreme thing that a whole lifetime of effort however arduous or painful is not by any means too much to give to it. … But this at least is a thing that is true and that others whose spiritual experience and greatness cannot be disputed would tell you." (CWSA 31: 751–752)

LXVIII—The Divine Mother Has Stooped to Descend into World-Pain So That She May End Pain

1.

"The Mother [*as the Mahashakti*] not only governs all from above but she descends into this lesser triple universe. … But personally too she has stooped to descend here into the Darkness that she may lead it to the Light, into the Falsehood and Error that she may convert it to the Truth, into this Death that she may turn it to godlike Life, into this world-pain and its obstinate sorrow and suffering that she may end it in the transforming ecstasy of her sublime Ananda." (CWSA 32: 17)

2.

"Is it not, for the Divine, a supreme sacrifice to renounce the beatitude of His unity in order to create the painful multiplicity of the world?" (CWM 15: 8)

3.

If her [*Mahakali*'s] anger is dreadful to the hostile and the vehemence of her pressure painful to the weak and timid, she is loved and worshipped by the great, the strong and the noble; for they feel that her blows beat what is rebellious in their material into strength and perfect truth, hammer straight what is wry and perverse and expel what is impure or defective." (CWSA 32: 20)

4.

"*Sometimes I feel as if I am a portion of the Mother come down into the manifestation for her work. As a result, I have to pass through various human births and experience pain, separation, suffering, falsehood and ignorance.*

It is true of every soul on earth that it is a portion of the Divine Mother passing through the experiences of the Ignorance in order to arrive at the truth of its being and be the instrument of a Divine Manifestation and work here." (CWSA 32: 61)

LXIX—Vedantic and Upanishadic Idea of Not Living in Pain and Grief

1.

"In opposition, therefore, to the Buddhistic declaration of the omnipresence of grief & pain outside Nirvana, we have in the Vedanta the soul's declaration of its ultimate & eternal independence: —

To live in the world is not necessarily to live in the duality of grief and joy. The soul seated in Ananda, even though it lives the life of the universe, possesses as its dominant principle unmixed bliss and can use in this world & this human life mind, life & body, sarvam idam, as instruments of God-enjoyment without enduring the dominion of their dualities." (CWSA 17: 460–461)

2.

"The Seer of the Upanishad sets before himself the same problem [to escape from the insistent pain, grief and suffering of the world] but arrives at a very different solution [compared to Buddha]; for he proceeds not from pity, but from a clear strength and a steady knowledge, perceiving the problem but not overpowered by it, samáhita, dhíra. Dwelling in a world of grief, pain, death and limitation, anityam asukham imam lokam prápya, yet irresistibly impelled by Nature to aspire after joy, immortality and freedom, bound not to renounce that

apparently impossible ideal on peril of forfeiting our highest, most consoling and most exalting impulses, how are we to reconcile this ineffugable contradiction or to escape from this unending struggle? This is the problem which the Seer solves in three brief words, tena tyaktena bhunjíthá h, again a monumental phrase whose echoes travel the whole of existence. It is because it provides the true practical basis for the solution he is going to suggest that he has preferred to announce at the outset the immediate and active relation of our twofold existence, God inhabiting Nature, rather than the remoter essential relation, God and Nature one Brahman. For the first practical step towards freedom must always be to distinguish between the Inhabitant and the habitation and withdraw from the motion towards the Lord of the motion. It is in the motion that these shadows of limitation, grief and death appear; the Inhabitant is free, blissful and immortal. To escape, then, we must turn from the world to the Master of the world; in ordinary religious parlance, we must renounce the world in order to find and possess God. So also the Gita, after describing our condition, arrived in this transient and troubled world, anityam asukham imam lokam prápya, immediately points out the remedy, bhajaswa Mam. Turn & cleave ´ rather to me, the Lord." (CWSA 17: 449)

3.

"Till the birth of Sri Aurobindo, religions and spiritualities were always centred on past figures, and they were showing as 'the goal' the negation of life upon earth. So, you had a choice between two alternatives: either

—a life *in* this world with its round of petty pleasures and pains, joys and sufferings, threatened by hell if you were not behaving properly, or

—an escape *into* another world, heaven, nirvana, moksha.... Between these two there is nothing much to choose, they are equally bad.

Sri Aurobindo has told us that this was a fundamental mistake which accounts for the weakness and degradation of India. Buddhism, Jainism, Illusionism were sufficient to sap all energy out of the country.

True, India is the only place in the world which is still aware that something else than Matter exists. The other countries have quite forgotten it: Europe, America and elsewhere.... That is why she still has a message to preserve and deliver to the world. But at present she is splashing and floundering in the muddle.

Sri Aurobindo has shown that the truth does not lie in running away from earthly life but in remaining *in* it, to *transform it, divinise it*, so that the Divine can manifest HERE, in this PHYSICAL WORLD." (CWM 12: 210–211)

LXX—He Who Would Save the Race Must Share Its Pain

1.

"He who would save the race must share its pain:
This he shall know who obeys that grandiose urge.
The Great who came to save this suffering world
And rescue out of Time's shadow and the Law,
Must pass beneath the yoke of grief and pain;
They are caught by the Wheel that they had hoped to break,
On their shoulders they must bear man's load of fate." (CWSA 34: 445)

2.

"He carries the suffering world in his own breast;
Its sins weigh on his thoughts, its grief is his:
Earth's ancient load lies heavy on his soul;
Night and its powers beleaguer his tardy steps,
The Titan adversary's clutch he bears;
His march is a battle and a pilgrimage.
Life's evil smites, he is stricken with the world's pain:
A million wounds gape in his secret heart.
He journeys sleepless through an unending night;
Antagonist forces crowd across his path;
A siege, a combat is his inner life.
Even worse may be the cost, direr the pain:

His large identity and all-harbouring love
Shall bring the cosmic anguish into his depths,
The sorrow of all living things shall come
And knock at his doors and live within his house;
A dreadful cord of sympathy can tie
All suffering into his single grief and make
All agony in all the worlds his own.
He meets an ancient adversary Force,
He is lashed with the whips that tear the world's worn heart;
The weeping of the centuries visits his eyes:
He wears the blood-glued fiery Centaur shirt,
The poison of the world has stained his throat." (CWSA 34: 446–447)

3.

"His spirit's stature transcending pain and bliss,
He fronts evil and good with calm and equal eyes." (CWSA 34: 449)

4.

"He must enter the eternity of Night
And know God's darkness as he knows his Sun.
For this he must go down into the pit,
For this he must invade the dolorous Vasts.
Imperishable and wise and infinite,
He still must travel Hell the world to save.

Into the eternal Light he shall emerge
On borders of the meeting of all worlds;
There on the verge of Nature's summit steps
The secret Law of each thing is fulfilled,
All contraries heal their long dissidence.
There meet and clasp the eternal opposites,
There pain becomes a violent fiery joy;
Evil turns back to its original good,
And sorrow lies upon the breasts of Bliss:
She has learned to weep glad tears of happiness;
Her gaze is charged with a wistful ecstasy.
Then shall be ended here the Law of Pain.
Earth shall be made a home of Heaven's light,
A seer heaven-born shall lodge in human breasts;
The superconscient beam shall touch men's eyes
And the truth-conscious world come down to earth
Invading Matter with the Spirit's ray,
Awaking its silence to immortal thoughts,
Awaking the dumb heart to the living Word.
This mortal life shall house Eternity's bliss,
The body's self taste immortality.
Then shall the world-redeemer's task be done." (CWSA 34: 450–451)

5.

"A greatness in thy daughter's soul resides
That can transform herself and all around

But must cross on stones of suffering to its goal.
Although designed like a nectar cup of heaven,
Of heavenly ether made she sought this air,
She too must share the human need of grief
And all her cause of joy transmute to pain." (CWSA 34: 457)

6.

"Thou hast come down into a struggling world
To aid a blind and suffering mortal race,
To open to Light the eyes that could not see,
To bring down bliss into the heart of grief,
To make thy life a bridge twixt earth and heaven;
If thou wouldst save the toiling universe,
The vast universal suffering feel as thine:
Thou must bear the sorrow that thou claimst to heal;
The day-bringer must walk in darkest night.
He who would save the world must share its pain.
If he knows not grief, how shall he find grief's cure?
If far he walks above mortality's head,
How shall the mortal reach that too high path?
If one of theirs they see scale heaven's peaks,
Men then can hope to learn that titan climb.
God must be born on earth and be as man
That man being human may grow even as God.
He who would save the world must be one with the world,
All suffering things contain in his heart's space

And bear the grief and joy of all that lives." (CWSA 34: 536–537)

7.

"A prodigal of her rich divinity,
Her self and all she was she had lent to men,
Hoping her greater being to implant
And in their body's lives acclimatise
That heaven might native grow on mortal soil.
Hard is it to persuade earth-nature's change;
Mortality bears ill the eternal's touch:
It fears the pure divine intolerance
Of that assault of ether and of fire;
It murmurs at its sorrowless happiness,
Almost with hate repels the light it brings;
It trembles at its naked power of Truth
And the might and sweetness of its absolute Voice.
Inflicting on the heights the abysm's law,
It sullies with its mire heaven's messengers:
Its thorns of fallen nature are the defence
It turns against the saviour hands of Grace;
It meets the sons of God with death and pain." (CWSA 33: 7)

8.

"I ask thee not to merge thy heart of flame
In the Immobile's wide uncaring bliss,

Turned from the fruitless motion of the years,
Deserting the fierce labour of the worlds,
Aloof from beings, lost in the Alone.
How shall thy mighty spirit brook repose
While Death is still unconquered on the earth
And Time a field of suffering and pain?
Thy soul was born to share the laden Force;
Obey thy nature and fulfil thy fate:
Accept the difficulty and godlike toil,
For the slow-paced omniscient purpose live.
The Enigma's knot is tied in humankind." (CWSA 33: 335–336)

9.

"One had returned from the transcendent planes
And bore anew the load of mortal breath,
Who had striven of old with our darkness and our pain;
She took again her divine unfinished task:
Survivor of death and the aeonic years,
Once more with her fathomless heart she fronted Time." (CWSA 34: 353)

10.

"Although Fate lingers in the high Beyond
And the work seems vain on which our heart's force was spent,
All shall be done for which our pain was borne." (CWSA 33: 344)

LXXI—Do Not Feel Pain or Shame Due to Ideas of Incapacity, Defects, Failures, Difficulties, or Stumblings

1.

"Not to be disturbed, to remain quiet and confident is the right attitude, but it is necessary also to receive the help of the Mother and not to shrink back for any reason from her solicitude. One ought not to indulge ideas of incapacity, inability to respond, dwelling too much on defects and failures and allowing the mind to be in pain and shame on their account; for these ideas and feelings become in the end weakening things. If there are difficulties, stumblings or failures, one has to look at them quietly and call in tranquilly and persistently the divine help for their removal, but not to allow oneself to be upset or pained or discouraged. Yoga is not an easy path and the total change of the nature cannot be done in a day." (CWSA 32: 294)

LXXII—The Tamasic Unwillingness to Accept Pain Is a Weakening and Degrading Thing

1.

"The tamasic unwillingness to accept the pain and effort of life is indeed by itself a weakening and degrading thing, and in this lies the danger of preaching to all alike the gospel of asceticism and world-disgust, that it puts the stamp of a tamasic weakness and shrinking on unfit souls, confuses their understanding, *buddhibhedaṁ janayet*, diminishes the sustained aspiration, the confidence in living, the power of effort which the soul of man needs for its salutary, its necessary rajasic struggle to master its environment, without really opening to it—for it is yet incapable of that—a higher goal, a greater endeavour, a mightier victory. But in souls that are fit this tamasic recoil may serve a useful spiritual purpose by slaying their rajasic attraction, their eager preoccupation with the lower life which prevents the sattwic awakening to a higher possibility." (CWSA 19: 194)

2.

"As the tamasic inward recoil is a generalisation of Nature's principle of *jugupsā* or self-protection from suffering, so the rajasic upward movement is a generalization of Nature's other principle of the acceptance of struggle and effort and the innate impulse of life towards mastery and

victory; but it transfers the battle to the field where alone complete victory is possible. Instead of a struggle for scattered outward aims and transient successes, it proposes nothing less than the conquest of Nature and the world itself by a spiritual struggle and an inner victory. The tamasic recoil turns from both the pains and pleasures of the world to flee from them; the rajasic movement turns upon them to bear, master and rise superior to them. The Stoic self-discipline calls desire and passion into its embrace of the wrestler and crushes them between its arms, as did old Dhritarashtra in the epic the iron image of Bhima. It endures the shock of things painful and pleasurable, the causes of the physical and mental affections of the nature, and breaks their effects to pieces; it is complete when the soul can bear all touches without being pained or attracted, excited or troubled. It seeks to make man the conqueror and king of his nature." (CWSA 19: 195)

LXXIII—The Mother Was Pained to See the Ordinary and Futile Reactions of a Sadhaka

1.

"For instance, you asked for leave today. I did not think you required more relaxation. Your life here is organised on a routine of almost constant relaxation. However, I agreed to your request. But the way in which you received the 'good news' pained me. Some of you even seemed to consider it a victory. But I ask, victory of what, against what? The victory of inconscience against the joy of learning and knowing more and more? The victory of unruliness against order and rule? The victory of the ignorant and superficial will over the endeavour towards progress and self-conquest?

This is, you must know, the very ordinary movement of those who live in the ordinary condition of life and education. But as for you, if you wish to realise the great ideal that is our goal, you must not remain content with the ordinary and futile reactions of ordinary people who live in the blind and ignorant conditions of ordinary life." (CWSA 12: 153)

2.

"*I will be very pleased to know the real cause of your discontent and shall try my best to remove it. I cannot tell*

you how it pains me to know that you are displeased with me on any account.

There is no real cause because there is no discontent. Your pain is quite gratuitous, so you would [do] better [to] get rid of it immediately.

With my love and blessings." (CWM 16: 143)

3.

"*How many more days must I suffer in this dark and painful abyss? I am very sad that I cannot be Your child.*

I do not understand what you mean; I have never told you that you cannot be my child. I have told you, on the contrary, that in your psychic being you are my child, and that you will become fully conscious of it when you become conscious of your psychic being." (CWM 17: 114)

4.

"*Deliver me from this painful obscurity. Give me at least one drop of peace and happiness.*

You are like someone plunged in the ocean who complains of a lack of water!" (CWM 17: 115)

LXXIV—Vibrations of Pain and Sorrow Can Enter You

1.

"And that is *very* easy to find out; of all things this is the easiest to discern, because ninety times out of a hundred it comes to you from someone else or from a certain circumstance or a set of circumstances, or from a vibration coming from another person or several other people. It is very easy to discern, it is the first thing one can discern: it is a vibration which suddenly awakens something similar in you. …

… One lives amidst constant collective suggestions, constantly; for example, I don't know if you have been present at funerals, or if you have been in a house where someone has died—naturally you must observe yourself a little, otherwise you won't notice anything—but if you observe yourself a little, you will see that you had no special reason to feel any sorrow or grief whatever for the passing away of this person; he is a person like many others; this has happened and by a combination of social circumstances you have come to that house. And there, suddenly, without knowing why or how, you feel a strong emotion, a great sorrow, a deep pain, and you ask yourself, 'Why am I so unhappy?' It is quite simply the vibrations which have entered you, nothing else.

And I tell you it is easy to observe, for it is an experience I had when I was a little child—and at that time I was not yet doing conscious yoga; perhaps I was doing yoga but not consciously—and I observed it very, very clearly. I told myself, 'Surely it is their sorrow I am feeling, for I have no reason to be specially affected by this person's death'; and all of a sudden, tears came to my eyes, I felt as though a lump were in my throat and I wanted to cry, as though I were in great sorrow—I was a small child—and immediately I understood, 'Oh! it is their sorrow which has come inside me.' (CWM 8: 53–54)

LXXV—To Transform Pain into Pleasure Is a Perversion and Should Not Be Done

1.

"*Sweet Mother, how can one transform pain into forms of pleasure?*

Ah! But that's not something to be done, my children. I shall certainly not give you the method! It is a perversion.

…

I knew someone who had... I don't know if you have ever had an ingrowing nail—an ingrowing nail means a nail which enters the skin, it hurts very much when it is in the foot; it grows into the skin; so naturally, especially if one wears tight shoes, it hurts very much. Well, I knew a boy who started pressing his nail, like this (*gesture*), with the idea that pain is simply an incapacity to bear certain intensities of vibrations, you see; so he went beyond the measure, and in fact he pressed, it hurt abominably at first, he pressed until his hurt was changed into a kind of pleasure, and this succeeded very well.

If you have some pain, and you give yourself much more pain still, then finally there's a moment when you either faint away (people who are a little weak and not very enduring faint) or else it changes into pleasure; but this is not recommendable. I am just telling you that it can be done. I saw a boy—he was twelve—who was doing that,

and he was doing it very deliberately, very consciously. He had never heard of yoga but he had found it out all by himself. But this is not recommendable because his toe became worse. This didn't make it better at all." (CWM 7: 147–148)

LXXVI—Creating an Atmosphere Where There Is No Pain or Misery According to Buddha's Teachings

1.

"The idea on which he [Buddha] always insisted is that you create, by your conduct and the state of your consciousness, the world in which you live. Everyone carries in himself the world in which he lives and in which he will continue to live even when he loses his body, because, according to the Buddha's teaching, there is, so to say, no difference between life in the body and life outside the body.

… Nothing is more disheartening than to live in an atmosphere of wickedness.

But when you are good, when you are generous, noble, disinterested, kind, you create in you, around you, a particular atmosphere and this atmosphere is a sort of luminous release. You breathe, you blossom like a flower in the sun; there is no painful recoil on yourself, no bitterness, no revolt, no miseries. Spontaneously, naturally, the atmosphere becomes luminous and the air you breathe is full of happiness. And this is the air that you breathe, in your body and out of your body, in the waking state and in the state of sleep, in life and in the passage beyond life, outside earthly life until your new life.

Every wrong action produces on the consciousness the effect of a wind that withers, of a cold that freezes or of burning flames that consume.

Every good and kind deed brings light, restfulness, joy—the sunshine in which flowers bloom." (CWM 3: 199–200)

2.

"It always seems to me that the reasons usually given for becoming wise are poor reasons: 'Don't do this, it will bring you suffering; don't do that, it will give birth to fear in you'... and the consciousness dries up more and more, it hardens, because it is afraid of grief, afraid of pain.

I think it would be better to say that there is a certain state of consciousness—which one can acquire by aspiration and a persistent inner effort—in which joy is unmixed and light shadowless, where all possibility of fear disappears. It is the state in which one does not live for oneself but where whatever one does, whatever one feels, all movements are an offering made to the Supreme, in an absolute trust, freeing oneself of all responsibility for oneself, handing over to Him all this burden which is no longer a burden." (CWM 3: 256)

3.

"The first verse [*As the elephant on the battlefield endures the arrow shot from the bow, so also shall I patiently bear*

insult, for truly there are many of evil mind in the world.] gives some very wise advice: the war elephant who has been well trained does not start running away as soon as he receives an arrow. He continues to advance and bears the pain, with no change in his attitude of heroic resistance. Those who wish to follow the true path will naturally be exposed to the attacks of all forms of bad will, which not only do not understand, but generally hate what they do not understand.

If you are worried, grieved or even discouraged by the malicious stupidities that men say about you, you will not advance far on the way. And such things come to you, not because you are unlucky or because your lot is not a happy one, but because, on the contrary, the divine Consciousness and the divine Grace take your resolution seriously and allow the circumstances to become a touchstone on your way, to see whether your resolution is sincere and whether you are strong enough to face the difficulties." (CWM 3: 281–282)

4.

"It was the agony of this problem that seized on Buddha and drove him from his kingly home & rich domestic joys to wander through the world as a beggar and ascetic; to escape from the insistent pain, grief and suffering of the world the Lord of Pity discovered for man the eightfold path, the law of compassion & self-sacrifice, the heavenly

door of renunciation and the silent and blindly luminous haven of Nirvana." (CWSA 17: 449)

5.

"I would like us to make the resolution to raise ourselves each day, in all sincerity and goodwill, in an ardent aspiration towards the Sun of Truth, towards the Supreme Light, the source and intellectual life of the universe, so that it may pervade us entirely and illumine with its great brilliance our minds and hearts, all our thoughts and our actions.

Then we shall acquire the right and the privilege of following the counsel of the great initiate of the past, who tells us:

'With your hearts overflowing with compassion, go forth into this world torn by pain, be instructors, and wherever the darkness of ignorance rules, there light a torch'." (CWM 2: 29)

LXXVII—Those Who Have Died Have Not Suffered Any Painful or Terrible Changes of Condition

1.

"Our sorrow for the death of men is an ignorant grieving for those for whom there is no cause to grieve, since they have neither gone out of existence nor suffered any painful or terrible change of condition, but are beyond death no less in being and no more unhappy in circumstance than in life. But in reality the higher truth is the real truth. All are that Self, that One, that Divine whom we look on and speak and hear of as the wonderful beyond our comprehension, for after all our seeking and declaring of knowledge and learning from those who have knowledge no human mind has ever known this Absolute." (CWSA 19: 63)

2.

"*When one dies, does one necessarily feel physical pain?*

Not necessarily." (CWM 12: 345)

3.

"Normally the consciousness of the departed ought to feel no pain for what happens to the body after his or her departure. But there is in the material body itself a consciousness called the 'spirit of the form' which takes some time to get completely out of the aggregated cells;

its departure is the starting point of a general decomposition, and before its departure it may have a kind of feeling of what happens to the body. That is why it is always better not to be in a hurry for the funeral." (CWM 15: 121–122)

4.

(*To someone whose friend had died*)

"Now you are no longer able to bend over this body and take care of it, you can no longer express through your acts your deep affection, and it is this which is painful. But you must overcome this sorrow and look within, look above, for it is only the material body that will be dissolved. All that you loved in her is in no way affected by the dissolution of the material envelope; and if, in the calm of a deep love, you concentrate your thought and your energy on her, you will see that she will remain close to you and that you can have a conscious contact with her, a contact more and more concrete." (CWM 15: 122–123)

5.

"My dear child,

The sudden departure of X is a painful loss for all here. He was perfect in consecration and honest in his work, a man on whom one could count, which is a truly exceptional quality. He has departed into a solar light and

is enjoying the conscious rest which he truly deserved." (CWM 15: 124)

LXXVIII— The Hostile Forces Touch the Neglected Spot and Make It Painfully Evident So That One Will Be Forced to Change

1.

"*Will a time come when the hostile forces will be there no longer?*

When their presence in the world is no more of any use, they will disappear. Their action is used as a testing process, so that nothing may be forgotten, nothing left out in the work of transformation. They will allow no mistake. If you have overlooked in your own being even a single detail, they will come and put their touch upon that neglected spot and make it so painfully evident that you will be forced to change. When they will no longer be required for this process, their existence will become useless and they will vanish. They are suffered to exist here, because they are necessary in the Great Work; once they are no more indispensable, they will either change or go." (CWM 3: 66)

2.

"Q: In *Conversations* the Mother says about the hostile forces: 'If you have overlooked in your own being even a single detail, they will come and put their touch upon that neglected spot and make it so painfully evident that you

will be forced to change" When sadhaks overlook even a single detail on the path of transformation, is it not possible that the Divine will make them conscious of it rather than becoming conscious through a painful wound by the hostile forces?

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

Q: Those who cannot reject their lower nature fully are made to suffer at the hands of the hostile forces and get wounded by them. What is the best means for them to go forward?

A: Faith in the Mother and complete surrender." (CWSA 32: 620)

3.

"O Fire, burn away from us all hostile powers with the consuming flames with which thou didst burn the afflicting demon, destroy Pain so that no voice of her is left." Hymns to Agni (CWSA 16: 298)

4.

"A power came in to veil the eternal Light,
A power opposed to the eternal will
Diverts the messages of the infallible Word,
Contorts the contours of the cosmic plan:
A whisper lures to evil the human heart,
It seals up wisdom's eyes, the soul's regard,
It is the origin of our suffering here,
It binds earth to calamity and pain.
This all must conquer who would bring down God's peace.
This hidden foe lodged in the human breast
Man must overcome or miss his higher fate.
This is the inner war without escape." (CWSA 34: 447–448)

LXXIX— In Suicide, the Last Moments of a Person Are Filled with Disgust and Pain, and They Continue to Relive the Final Scene of Their Life

1.

"This then is the Asuric world. When a man dies in great pain or in great grief or in fierce agitation of mind and his last thoughts are full of fear, rage, pain or horror, then the Jivatman in the Sukshmasharir is unable to shake off these impressions from his mind for years, perhaps for centuries. So it is with the suicide; he sinks into this condition because of the feelings of disgust, impatience and pain or rage & fear which govern his last moments; for suicide is not the passionless & divine departure at his appointed time of the Yogin centred in samadhi, but a passionate and disgustful departure; and where there is disturbance or bitterness of the soul in its departure, there can be no tranquillity & sweetness in the state to which it departs. This is the law of death; death is a moment of intense concentration when the departing spirit gathers up the impressions of its mortal life as a host gathers provender for its journey, and whatever impressions are dominant at the moment, govern its condition afterwards." (CWSA 17: 213–214)

2.

"The Sruti says then that those who slay themselves go down into the nether world of gloom, for they have associated the Self with body and fancied that by getting

rid of this body, they will be free, but they have died full of impressions of grief, impatience, disgust and pain. In that state of gloom they are continually repeating the last scene of their life, its impressions and its violent disquiet, and until they have worn off these, there is no possibility of shanti for their minds. Let no man in his folly or impatience court such a doom." Isha Upanishad (CWSA 17: 123)

3.

"Hell and heaven are often imaginary states of the soul, or rather of the vital being, which it constructs about it after its passing. What is meant by hell is a painful passage through some vital world or a dolorous [painful] lingering there, as for instance in many cases of suicide where one remains surrounded by the forces of suffering and turmoil created by this unnatural and violent exit." (CWSA 28: 535)

4.

"Suicide solves nothing—it only brings one back to life with the same difficulties to be faced in worse conditions. If one wishes to escape from life altogether, it can only be by the way of complete inner renunciation and merging oneself in the Silence of the Absolute or by a bhakti that becomes absolute or by a karmayoga that gives up one's own will and desires to the will of the Divine." (CWSA 29: 174)

5.

"The idea of suicide ought never to be accepted; there is no real ground for it and in any case it cannot be a remedy or a real escape: at most it can only be postponement of difficulties and the necessity for their solution under no better circumstances in another life. One must have faith in the Master of our life and works, even if for a long time he conceals himself, and then in his own right time he will reveal his Presence." (CWSA 31: 206)

6.

"Suicide is an absurd solution; he is quite mistaken in thinking that it will give him peace. He will only carry his difficulties with him, enter into a more miserable condition of existence beyond and bring them back to another life on earth. The only remedy is to shake off these morbid ideas and face life with a clear will for some definite work to be done as the life's aim and with a quiet and active courage." (CWSA 31: 747)

7.

"That is absurd! Dropping the body because of a difficulty does not enable one to come back with a better body. One comes back with the same difficulty to solve." (CWSA 31: 747)

8.

"Sadhana has to be done in the body, it cannot be done by the soul without the body. When the body drops, the soul goes wandering in other worlds—and finally it comes back to another life and another body. Then all the difficulties it had not solved meet it again in the new life. So what is the use of leaving the body?

Moreover if one throws away the body wilfully, one suffers much in the other worlds, and when one is born again, it is in worse, not in better conditions.

The only sensible thing is to face the difficulties in this life and this body and conquer them." (CWSA 31: 748)

9.

"Death is not a way to succeed in sadhana. If you die in that way [*suicide*], you will only have the same difficulties again with probably less favourable circumstances.

The way to succeed in sadhana is to refuse to be discouraged, to aspire simply and sincerely so that the Mother's force may work in you and bring down what is above. No man ever succeeded in this sadhana by his own merit. To become open and plastic to the Mother is the one thing needed." (CWSA 31: 748)

10.

"Suicide is no solution; it only injures the life of the soul and the problems and difficulties one tries to evade by it

seize one again in another form in another life." (CWSA 31: 748)

11.

"It [*an impulse to commit suicide*] can come from two sources. (1) An old impression in the subconscient, usually from a past suicide in the family or surroundings. (2) An invasion from one of those around you. Many sadhaks have this suggestion and in some it takes the form of a periodic attack. One must never allow the suggestion to stick or in the least entertain it, otherwise it may fasten in the subconscient and give trouble." (CWSA 31: 748)

12.

"Your reasoning about violently getting rid of the body in order to get a better one hereafter is entirely wrong. For when one throws away the present life in that way instead of facing its difficulties one not only gets into blacker difficulties after death but in the next life all becomes not better but worse—an inferior embodiment with all the former difficulty from which you fled renewed with less favourable circumstances. There is no way out there. Instead of indulging such feelings, you should put them away from you and turn to the Mother's Grace which has not failed and which is not going to fail you for strength and succour. Recover your balance and develop the psychic

progress you were already making so rapidly up to now." (CWSA 31: 749)

13.

"Suicide is not only a weak and unmanly evasion, but it is worse than useless since the same misery continues after death intensified in the consciousness which can think of nothing else and one has to come back to earth and face the same difficulties under worse conditions. The Gita has never said that suicide can under any circumstances lead to Nirvana; the death spoken of is a natural or a Yogic death with the mind concentrated with faith and absorption in the Divine. I am sure that Ramakrishna also never meant such a thing as that anyone dying under any circumstances would have his last wish satisfied. There is no escape by that kind of exit. … All that apart, I must press on you not to allow these dark attacks with their morbid suggestions to carry you away. If you have the true yearning for the Divine, as you have undoubtedly in your soul, it is not by yielding to vital weakness that you will show it but by persisting, whatever the time and the difficulties, till it is achieved. You have promised to do that and I again recall you to your promise. Nirvana itself cannot be so achieved, but only by rising above all other desires and attachments until one has the supreme liberation and peace." (CWSA 31: 750–751)

LXXIX— In Suicide, the Last Moments of a Person Are Filled with Disgust and Pain, and They Continue to Relive the Final Scene of Their Life

14.

"To characterise suicide as a willed withdrawal from life is the most astounding statement that would not bear a moment's scrutiny. Suicide is accompanied in most cases by a morbid feeling of disappointment with life, a violent revolt against what is considered the imposition of an unjust providence or an adverse malignant fate. It has nothing of the sense of freedom behind it, no knowledge of the play of forces behind the exterior life, no means of mastering them or using them as stepping-stones to a higher freedom, a greater destiny. The calm poise of the soul, the peace that surpasseth understanding are not his. He is moved by dark forces who hold him completely in their grip. The sense of freedom of which he vaunts is the conjuring trick of the black magician by which he is deluded and dragged to a greater degradation. That is why it is said in the Upanishads that those who slay themselves enter into blind worlds of darkness. A violent exit by suicide is an act of excessive egoism, not of freedom.

The true freedom is found in unity with God and in the abiding sense of immortality, when the soul has risen above the bondage of his lower nature, and from the spirit heights of his being can survey his actions seated in a calm, untouched, unmoved by happenings in Time." (CWSA 31: 752)

LXXIX— In Suicide, the Last Moments of a Person Are Filled with Disgust and Pain, and They Continue to Relive the Final Scene of Their Life

15.

"The idea of suicide is always a sign of these Asuric formations. Like all the rest it is perfectly irrational—for the suicide after death goes through a hell of misery far worse than was possible in life and when he is reborn he has to face the same problems and difficulties he fled from, but in an acuter form and in much less favourable circumstances. The other justifying suggestions were equally irrational and untrue. Wherever you went, the blow would always fall on ourselves and the Asram, for you are and would remain too intimately identified with us for it to be otherwise and distance would make no difference. And certainly the verse in the Gita does not cover a case of suicide, but refers to the consciousness and concentration of the Yogi in his departure." (CWSA 32: 101)

LXXX—How to Conquer the Karma of Suicide in Past Lives

1.

"This sort of fatality that one sometimes feels weighing heavy on one's life, which is called Karma in India, is the result of past lives; indeed, it is something that has to be exhausted, something that weighs on one's consciousness.

This is how things happen: the psychic being passes from one life to another, each life on earth being the occasion and means for a further progress, for a further growth. But it can happen that the psychic takes birth with the intention of going through a certain experience, of learning a certain thing, of developing a certain faculty through a definite experience. …

… if conditions make it impossible once again for what the psychic wants to do, if, for example, it is in a body with an inadequate will or a deformation in the thought or too tough an egoism and the attempt ends in suicide, then it is something frightful. I have seen it many times; it creates a dreadful Karma which may repeat itself life after life before the soul becomes capable of conquering and doing what it wants to do. And each time the conditions become more and more difficult, each time a considerably greater effort is demanded.

…

But if only once the soul has made an appeal, if once it has made contact with the Grace, then in the following life, one immediately finds oneself in conditions where everything can be swept away at one stroke. At that moment you need to have a great courage, a great endurance, though at times a true love is sufficient. And if there is faith—a little, a very very little is enough—then everything is swept away. But in most cases what you need is a great stoic courage, a capacity to endure and to hold out: the resistance, especially in the case of a previous suicide, resistance to the temptation to again begin this foolishness—because it makes a terrible formation. There is also this habit of not looking the difficulty straight in the face, which is translated by taking flight. When suffering comes, fly, fly, instead of absorbing the difficulty, instead of holding tight, that is to say, not stirring within, not yielding, yes, above all, not yielding when you feel within: 'I cannot bear it any longer.' Hold your head as quiet as possible, do not follow the movement, do not obey the vibration.

That is what is needed, just that: faith in the Grace, perception of the Grace, or else, intensity of call, or better still, the response, the response, the knot opening, breaking, the response to this wonderful love of the Grace.

…

Generally, when the time has come for a Karma to be conquered and absorbed by the Grace, there also comes

the image or the knowledge or the experience of the exact facts that are the cause of the Karma, and then at that moment you can start the cleaning.

But it is just at the most painful point, there where the suggestions are the strongest, that you must bear the blow. Otherwise you will always have to start over again, always start over again.

One day a moment comes when the thing has to be done, when one must make the true inner gesture that liberates. To tell the truth, just now there is upon earth an opportunity which presents itself only after thousands of years, a conscious help with the necessary power. It was once believed that nothing had the power to wipe away the consequences of a Karma, that it was only by exhausting it through a series of purificatory acts that the consequences could be transformed, exhausted, effaced. But with the supramental power, this can be done without the need of going through all the steps of the process of liberation." 22 November 1958 (CWM 15: 371–374))

LXXXI—Samata Is the Capacity to Receive All Pain with a Calm and Equal Mind

1.

"*Samata*

The basis of internal peace is samata, the capacity of receiving with a calm and equal mind all the attacks and appearances of outward things, whether pleasant or unpleasant, ill-fortune and good-fortune, pleasure and pain, honour and ill-repute, praise and blame, friendship and enmity, sinner and saint, or, physically, heat and cold etc." (CWSA 10: 3)

2.

"*Titiksha*

Titiksha is the bearing firmly of all contacts pleasant or unpleasant, not being overpowered by that which is painful, not being carried away by that which is pleasant. Calmly and firmly to receive both and hold and bear them as one who is stronger, greater, vaster than any attack of the world, is the attitude of titiksha." (CWSA 10: 3)

3.

"*Titiksha.* The power to bear steadily & calmly all *sparshas* without any reaction in the centre of the being, whether they are pleasant or painful. The mind or body may desire or suffer, but the observing Purusha remains unattracted

and unshaken, observing only as Sakshi and as Ishwara holding the system firmly together & calmly willing the passing of the dwandwas. It does not crave for or demand the pleasure. It does not reject the pain. Even when pleasure or pain are excessive, it wills that the mind and body should not shrink from or repel them, but bear firmly. It deals in the same way with all dwandwas, hunger & thirst, heat & cold, health & disease, failure & success, honour and obloquy etc. It neither welcomes & rejoices, nor grieves & avoids. It gets rid of all jugupsa, fear, shrinking, recoil, sorrow, depression etc, ie all the means by which Nature (bhutaprakriti) warns us [against]1 & tries to protect from all that is hostile. It does not encourage them, nor does it necessarily interfere with such means as may be necessary to get rid of the adverse touches; nor does it reject physically, except as a temporary discipline, the pleasant touches; but inwardly it presents an equal front of endurance to all." (CWSA 10: 25)

4.

"Moreover, this discipline or this growth into equality of spirit has its necessary epochs and stages. Ordinarily we have to begin with a period of endurance; for we must learn to confront, to suffer and to assimilate all contacts. Each fibre in us must be taught not to wince away from that which pains and repels and not to run eagerly towards

that which pleases and attracts, but rather to accept, to face, to bear and to conquer." (CWSA 23: 226)

5.

" 'He who can bear here in the body the velocity of wrath and desire, is the Yogin, the happy man.' *Titiks. ā*, the will and power to endure, is the means. 'The material touches which cause heat and cold, happiness and pain, things transient which come and go, these learn to endure. For the man whom these do not trouble nor pain, the firm and wise who is equal in pleasure and suffering, makes himself apt for immortality.' The equal souled has to bear suffering and not hate, to receive pleasure and not rejoice. Even the physical affections are to be mastered by endurance and this too is part of the Stoic discipline. Age, death, suffering, pain are not fled from, but accepted and vanquished by a high indifference." (CWSA 19: 196)

6.

"O mortal, bear this great world's law of pain,
In thy hard passage through a suffering world
Lean for thy soul's support on Heaven's strength,
Turn towards high Truth, aspire to love and peace.
A little bliss is lent thee from above,
A touch divine upon thy human days.
Make of thy daily way a pilgrimage,

For through small joys and griefs thou mov'st towards God." (CWSA 34: 451)

7.

Udasinata

Udasinata is indifference to the dwandwas or dualities; it means literally being seated above, superior to all physical and mental touches. The udasina, free from desire, either does not feel the touch of joy & grief, pleasure and pain, liking and disliking, or he feels them as touching his mind and body, but not himself, he being different from mind and body and seated above them." (CWSA 10: 3–4)

8.

"*Nati*

Nati is the submission of the soul to the will of God; its acceptance of all touches as His touches, of all experience as His play with the soul of man. Nati may be with titiksha, feeling the sorrow but accepting it as God's will, or with udasinatá, rising superior to it and regarding joy and sorrow equally as God's working in these lower instruments, or with ananda, receiving everything as the play of Krishna and therefore in itself delightful. The last is the state of the complete Yogin, for by this continual joyous or anandamaya namaskara to God constantly practised we arrive eventually at the entire elimination of grief, pain etc, the entire freedom from the dwandwas, and find the

Brahmananda in every smallest, most trivial, most apparently discordant detail of life & experience in this human body. We get rid entirely of fear and suffering; Anandam Brahmano vidván na bibheti kutaschana. We may have to begin with titiksha and udasinata but it is in this ananda that we must consummate the siddhi of samata. The Yogin receives victory and defeat, success and ill-success, pleasure and pain, honour and disgrace with an equal, a sama ananda, first by buddhi-yoga, separating himself from his habitual mental & nervous reactions & insisting by vichara on the true nature of the experience itself and of his own soul which is secretly anandamaya, full of the sama ananda in all things. He comes to change all the ordinary values of experience; amangala reveals itself to him as mangala, defeat & ill-success as the fulfilment of God's immediate purpose and a step towards ultimate victory, grief and pain as concealed and perverse forms of pleasure. A stage arrives even, when physical pain itself, the hardest thing for material man to bear, changes its nature in experience and becomes physical ananda; but this is only at the end when this human being, imprisoned in matter, subjected to mind, emerges from his subjection, conquers hismind and delivers himself utterly in his body, realising his true anandamaya self in every part of the adh´ara." (CWSA 10: 4)

9.

Nati.

Nati is an equal submission to the will of the Ishwara. It regards all things as that will expressing itself and refuses to grieve or revolt inwardly at anything because it is hurt in its egoistic desires, opinions, preferences etc. Its whole attitude is based on the perception of God in all things & happenings. It accepts pleasure & pain, health & disease, bad fortune & good fortune, honour & disgrace, praise & blame, action & inaction, failure & victory; but attaches itself to none of them. Nati is not a tamasic acquiescence in inaction, a subjection to failure, an indifference to life. That is tamasic udasinata. Nati is active; it accepts life & effort as part of God's will & His being, but it is prepared equally for all results." (CWSA 10: 27)

10.

"It is the dualities born of ego-sense in the heart, mind & body which creates grief and pain. We have to unite ourselves with this Self, Lord & One & with all things in Him, viewing them as our self, in order to get rid of pain & enjoy the divine Ananda. But, first, it is necessary that we should accept without revolt the Lila equally in all its details & happenings. This comes by Nati." (CWSA 10: 28)

11.

"Whoever is subject to grief and sorrow, a slave to the sensations and emotions, occupied by the touches of things transient cannot become fit for immortality. These things must be borne until they are conquered, till they can give no pain to the liberated man, till he is able to receive all the material happenings of the world whether joyful or sorrowful with a wise and calm equality, even as the tranquil eternal Spirit secret within us receives them. To be disturbed by sorrow and horror as Arjuna has been disturbed, to be deflected by them from the path that has to be travelled, to be overcome by self-pity and intolerance of sorrow and recoil from the unavoidable and trivial circumstance of the death of the body, this is un-Aryan ignorance. It is not the way of the Aryan climbing in calm strength towards the immortal life." (CWSA 19: 62)

12.

"Man's urge of self-perfection is to be, in the ancient language, *svarāṭ* and *samrāṭ*, self-ruler and king. But to be self-ruler is not possible for him if he is subject to the attack of the lower nature, to the turbulence of grief and joy, to the violent touches of pleasure and pain, to the tumult of his emotions and passions, to the bondage of his personal likings and dislikings, to the strong chains of desire and attachment, to the narrowness of a personal and emotionally preferential judgment and opinion, to all the

hundred touches of his egoism and its pursuing stamp on his thought, feeling and action. All these things are the slavery to the lower self which the greater 'I' in man must put under his feet if he is to be king of his own nature. To surmount them is the condition of self-rule; but of that surmounting again equality is the condition and the essence of the movement." (CWSA 24: 701–702)

13.

"A free heart is similarly a heart delivered from the gusts and storms of the affections and the passions; the assailing touch of grief, wrath, hatred, fear, inequality of love, trouble of joy, pain of sorrow fall away from the equal heart, and leave it a thing large, calm, equal, luminous, divine." (CWSA 24: 703–704)

14.

"I have come to this conclusion: in principle, it is the consciousness and the union with the Divine that bring rapture —this is the principle—therefore, the consciousness and the union with the Divine, whether in the world as it is or in the construction of a future world, must be the same—in principle. That is what I repeat to myself all the time: 'How is it that you do not have this rapture?'

I have it—when the whole consciousness is centralised in union; at any time, in the midst of anything,

with this movement of concentration of the consciousness on union, the rapture comes. But I must say that it disappears when I am working.... It is a world—a very chaotic world of work, where I act on everything around me; and necessarily, I am obliged to receive what is around me, so as to be able to act on it. I have reached a state in which all that I receive, even the things that are considered most painful, leave me absolutely calm and indifferent—'indifferent', not an inactive indifference: without any painful reaction of any kind, absolutely neutral (*gesture turned towards the Eternal*), with perfect equality. But in this equality there is a precise knowledge of what is to be done, of what is to be said, of what is to be written, of what is to be decided, in short, everything that action entails. All that happens in a state of perfect neutrality, with the sense of Power at the same time: the Power flows, the Power acts, and the neutrality remains—but there is no rapture. I do not have the enthusiasm, the delight, the fullness of action." (CWM 10: 172–173)

LXXXII—In Perfect Samata, Grief and Pain Change into Bliss

1.

"When you have perfect Samata, then either you will have perfect Shanti, divine peace, or else perfect or Shuddha Bhoga, divine enjoyment. Shanti is the negative Ananda and those have it who rest in the Nirguna Brahman. Shuddha Bhoga is the positive Ananda and those have it who rest in the Trigunatita Ananta Brahman. You can have both and it is best to have both. God enjoys the world with Shuddha Bhoga based on the perfect Shanti. Most people cannot imagine Bhoga without Kama, enjoyment without desire. It is a foolish notion, none the less foolish because it is natural and almost universal. It is Ajnanam, a fundamental part of ignorance. Enjoyment does not really begin until you get rid of desire. That which you get as the result of satisfied desire is troubled, unsafe, feverish, or limited, but Shuddha Bhoga is calm, self-possessed, victorious, unlimited, without satiety and Vairagya, immortally blissful. It is in a word, not Harsha, not Sukha, but Ananda. It is Amrita, it is divinity and immortality, it is becoming of one nature with God. The soul has then no kama, but it has pure lipsa, an infinite readiness to take and enjoy whatever God gives it. Grief, pain, disgrace, everything that is to rajasic men a torture, changes then to bliss. Even if such a soul were to be cast into hell, it would

not feel hell, but heaven. It would not only say with the Bhakta 'This is from the beloved' but with the perfect Jnani 'This is the Beloved; this is the Anandam Brahman: this is the Kantam, the Shivam, Shubham, Sundaram'." (CWSA 11: 1391)

2.

"[The] result of complete Samata is complete Shanti; on the other hand if there is any touch of anxiety, grief, disappointment, depression etc., it is a sign that Samata is not complete. When we get complete Shanti, then we get complete Sukham. Shanti is negative; it is a state of freedom from trouble. Sukham is positive; it is not merely freedom from grief and pain, but a positive state of happiness in the whole system." (CWSA 10: 1468)

3.

"And so too we shall have the same equality of mind and soul towards all happenings, painful or pleasurable, defeat and success, honour and disgrace, good repute and ill-repute, good fortune and evil fortune. For in all happenings we shall see the will of the Master of all works and results and a step in the evolving expression of the Divine. … Our souls and minds and bodies will remain unshaken by acutest sorrow and suffering and pain if in the divine dispensation they come to us, unoverpowered by intensest joy and pleasure. Thus supremely balanced we shall continue steadily on our way meeting all things with an

equal calm until we are ready for a more exalted status and can enter into the supreme and universal Ananda." (CWSA 23: 225)

4.

"… the elimination of suffering must first proceed by the substitution of *titikṣā*, the facing, enduring and conquest of all shocks of existence for *jugupsā*, the shrinking and contraction: by this endurance and conquest we proceed to an equality which may be either an equal indifference to all contacts or an equal gladness in all contacts; and this equality again must find a firm foundation in the substitution of the Sachchidananda consciousness which is All-Bliss for the ego-consciousness which enjoys and suffers. … the Sachchidananda consciousness may be at once transcendent and universal; and to this state of present and all-embracing Bliss the path is surrender and loss of the ego in the universal and possession of an all-pervading equal delight; it is the path of the ancient Vedic sages. But neutrality to the imperfect touches of pleasure and the perverse touches of pain is the first direct and natural result of the soul's self-discipline and the conversion to equal delight can, usually, come only afterwards. The direct transformation of the triple vibration into Ananda is possible, but less easy to the human being." (CWSA 21: 117–118)

LXXXIII—How to Overcome the Impacts That Cause Grief and Pain Through Samata

1.

"The first [part of equality] may be described as a passive or negative equality, an equality of reception which fronts impassively the impacts and phenomena of existence and negates the dualities of the appearances and reactions which they impose on us. … The effort towards a passive or purely receptive equality may start from three different principles or attitudes which all lead to the same result and ultimate consequence,—endurance, indifference and submission." (CWSA 24: 709)

The principle of endurance

2.

"The principle of endurance relies on the strength of the spirit within us to bear all the contacts, impacts, suggestions of this phenomenal Nature that besieges us on every side without being overborne by them and compelled to bear their emotional, sensational, dynamic, intellectual reactions. The outer mind in the lower nature has not this strength. Its strength is that of a limited force of consciousness which has to do the best it can with all that comes in upon it or besieges it from the greater whirl of consciousness and energy which environs it on this plane of existence. That it can maintain itself at all and affirm its

individual being in the universe, is due indeed to the strength of the spirit within it, but it cannot bring forward the whole of that strength or the infinity of that force to meet the attacks of life; if it could, it would be at once the equal and master of its world. In fact, it has to manage as it can." (CWSA 24: 709–710)

3.

"It [*the outer mind in the lower nature*] meets certain impacts and is able to assimilate, equate or master them partially or completely, … and then it has in that degree the emotional and sensational reactions of joy, pleasure, satisfaction, liking, love, etc., … and on these its will seizes with attraction, desire, the attempt to prolong, to repeat, to create, to possess, to make them the pleasurable habit of its life. Other impacts it meets, but finds them too strong for it or too dissimilar and discordant or too weak to give it satisfaction; these are things which it cannot bear or cannot equate with itself or cannot assimilate, and it is obliged to give to them reactions of grief, pain, discomfort, dissatisfaction, disliking, disapproval, … Against them it seeks to protect itself, to escape from them, to avoid or minimise their recurrence; it has with regard to them movements of fear, anger, shrinking, horror, aversion, disgust, shame, would gladly be delivered from them, but it cannot getaway from them, for it is bound to and even invites their causes and therefore the results; for these

impacts are part of life, tangled up with the things we desire, and the inability to deal with them is part of the imperfection of our nature." (CWSA 24: 710)

4.

"The soul which seeks mastery may begin by turning upon these reactions the encountering and opposing force of a strong and equal endurance. Instead of seeking to protect itself from or to shun and escape the unpleasant impacts it may confront them and teach itself to suffer and to bear them with perseverance, with fortitude, an increasing equanimity or an austere or calm acceptance. This attitude, this discipline brings out three results, three powers of the soul in relation to things. First, it is found that what was before unbearable, becomes easy to endure; the scale of the power that meets the impact rises in degree; it needs a greater and greater force of it or of its protracted incidence to cause trouble, pain, grief, aversion or any other of the notes in the gamut of the unpleasant reactions. Secondly, it is found that the conscious nature divides itself into two parts, one of the normal mental and emotional nature in which the customary reactions continue to take place, another of the higher will and reason which observes and is not troubled or affected by the passion of this lower nature, does not accept it as its own, does not approve, sanction or participate. Then the lower nature begins to lose the force and power of its reactions, to submit to the

suggestions of calm and strength from the higher reason and will, and gradually that calm and strength take possession of the mental and emotional, even of the sensational, vital and physical being. This brings the third power and result, the power by this endurance and mastery, this separation and rejection of the lower nature, to get rid of the normal reactions and even, if we will, to remould all our modes of experience by the strength of the spirit." (CWSA 24: 711)

The principle of impartial indifference

5.

"The second way is an attitude of impartial indifference. Its method is to reject at once the attraction or the repulsion of things, to cultivate for them a luminous impassivity, an inhibiting rejection, a habit of dissociation and desuetude. … It puts away desire from the mind, discards the ego which attributes these dual values to things, and replaces desire by an impartial and indifferent peace and ego by the pure self which is not troubled, excited or unhinged by the impacts of the world. … This way too develops three results or powers by which it ascends to peace.

First, it is found that the mind is voluntarily bound by the petty joys and troubles of life and that in reality these can have no inner hold on it, if the soul simply chooses to cast off its habit of helpless determination by external and

transient things. Secondly, it is found that here too a division can be made, a psychological partition between the lower or outward mind still subservient to the old habitual touches and the higher reason and will which stand back to live in the indifferent calm of the spirit." (CWSA 24: 712–713)

6.

"There grows on us, in other words, an inner separate calm which watches the commotion of the lower members without taking part in it or giving it any sanction. … eventually this calm becomes inexpugnable, permanent, not to be shaken by the most violent touches, … This inner soul of calm regards the trouble of the outer mind with a detached superiority or a passing uninvolved indulgence such as might be given to the trivial joys and griefs of a child, it does not regard them as its own or as reposing on any permanent reality. And, finally, the outer mind too accepts by degrees this calm and indifferent serenity; it ceases to be attracted by the things that attracted it or troubled by the griefs and pains to which it had the habit of attaching an unreal importance. Thus the third power comes, an all-pervading power of wide tranquility and peace, a bliss of release from the siege of our imposed fantastic self-torturing nature, the deep undisturbed exceeding happiness of the touch of the eternal and infinite replacing by its permanence the strife and turmoil of

impermanent things, *brahmasaṁsparśam atyantaṁ sukham aśnute.* The soul is fixed in the delight of the self, *ātmaratiḥ*, in the single and infinite Ananda of the spirit and hunts no more after outward touches and their griefs and pleasures. It observes the world only as the spectator of a play or action in which it is no longer compelled to participate." (CWSA 24: 713)

The principle of submission

7.

"The third way is that of submission, … founded on submission to the will of God, or an unegoistic acceptance of things and happenings as a manifestation of the universal Will in time, or a complete surrender of the person to the Divine, to the supreme Purusha. … For the knot of the ego is loosened and the personal claim begins to disappear, we find that we are no longer bound to joy in things pleasant or sorrow over the unpleasant; we bear them without either eager acceptance or troubled rejection, refer them to the Master of our being, concern ourselves less and less with their personal result to us and hold only one thing of importance, to approach God, or to be in touch and tune with the universal and infinite Existence, or to be united with the Divine, his channel, instrument, servant, lover, rejoicing in him and in our relation with him and having no other object or cause of

joy or sorrow. Here too there may be for some time a division between the lower mind of habitual emotions and the higher psychical mind of love and self-giving, but eventually the former yields, changes, transforms itself, is swallowed up in the love, joy, delight of the Divine and has no other interests or attractions. Then all within is the equal peace and bliss of that union, the one silent bliss that passes understanding, the peace that abides untouched by the solicitation of lower things in the depths of our spiritual existence." (CWSA 24: 713–714)

LXXXIV—When the Consciousness Ceases to Be Human, Removing Sexual Activity Will Not Be Painful

1.

"…humanity has the sexual impulse in a way altogether natural, spontaneous and, I would say, legitimate. This impulse will naturally and spontaneously disappear with animality. … But the most conscious impulse in a superior humanity, which has continued as a source of... bliss is a big word, but joy, delight—is the sexual activity, and that will have absolutely no reason for existence in the functions of Nature when the need to create in that way will no longer exist. … But what the ancient spiritual aspirants had sought on principle—sexual negation—is an absurd thing, because this must be only for those who have gone beyond this stage and no longer have animality in them. And it must drop off naturally, without effort and without struggle. To make of it a centre of conflict and struggle is ridiculous. It is only when the consciousness ceases to be human that it drops off quite naturally. Here also there is a transition which may be somewhat difficult, because the beings of transition are always in an unstable equilibrium; but within oneself there is a kind of flame and a need which makes it not painful—it is not painful effort, it is something that one can do with a smile. But to seek to impose it upon those who are not ready for this transition is absurd.

It is common sense. They are human, but they must not pretend that they are not.

It is only when spontaneously the impulse becomes impossible for you, when you feel that it is something painful and contrary to your deeper need that it becomes easy; then, well, externally you cut these bonds and it is finished." (CWM 11: 28)

LXXXV—Humanity that Is Ready for a Hard, Painful Life That Would Lead Towards Future Transformation Can Be Ready for the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo

1.

"There was all the humanity which is no longer altogether animal, which has benefited by mental development and created a kind of harmony in its life—a harmony vital and artistic, literary—in which the large majority are content to live. They have caught a kind of harmony, and within it they live life as it exists in a civilised surrounding, that is to say, somewhat cultured, with refined tastes and refined habits. And all this life has a certain beauty where they are at ease, and unless something catastrophic happens to them, they live happy and contented, satisfied with life. These people can be drawn (because they have a taste, they are intellectually developed), they can be attracted by the new forces, the new things, the future life; for example, they can become disciples of Sri Aurobindo mentally, intellectually. But they do not feel at all the need to change materially; and if they were compelled to do so, it would be first of all premature, unjust, and would simply create a great disorder and disturb their life altogether uselessly.

This was very clear.

Then there were some—rare individuals—who were ready to make the necessary effort to prepare for the

transformation and to draw the new forces, to try to adapt Matter, to seek means of expression, etc. These are ready for the yoga of Sri Aurobindo. They are very few in number. There are even those who have the sense of sacrifice and are ready for a hard, painful life, if that would lead or help towards this future transformation. But they should not, they should not in any way try to influence the others and make them share in their own effort; it would be altogether unfair—not only unfair, but extremely maladroit, for it would change the universal rhythm and movement, or at least the terrestrial movement, and instead of helping, it would create conflicts and end in a chaos." (CWM 11: 24–25)

LXXXVI—Under Pain and Suffering, Radha's Love Is Unshaken

1.

"I may say that the idea of a joyless God is an absurdity which only the ignorance of the mind could engender; the Radha love is not based upon any such thing, but means simply that whatever comes on the way to the Divine, pain or joy, *milana* or *viraha*, and however long the sufferings may last, the Radha love is unshaken and keeps its faith and certitude pointing fixedly like a star to the supreme object of Love." (CWSA 29: 13–14)

2.

"To complete what I told you yesterday about Radha's dance I have noted this down as an indication of the thought and feeling Radha must have within her when she stands at the end in front of Krishna:

"Every thought of my mind, every emotion of my heart, every movement of my being, every feeling and every sensation, each cell of my body, each drop of my blood, all, all is yours, yours absolutely, yours without reserve. You can decide my life or my death, my happiness or my sorrow, my pleasure or my pain; whatever you do with me, whatever comes to me from you will lead me to the Divine Rapture." (CWM 15: 209)

LXXXVII—The Divine Mother's Pain Is Suffering Through Identity

1.

"*Mother, suffering comes from ignorance and pain, but what is the nature of the suffering and pain the Divine Mother feels for her children—the Divine Mother in* Savitri*?*

It is because she participates in their nature. She has descended upon earth to participate in their nature. Because if she did not participate in their nature, she could not lead them farther. If she remained in her supreme consciousness where there is no suffering, in her supreme knowledge and consciousness, she could not have any contact with human beings. And it is for this that she is obliged to take on the human consciousness and form, it is to be able to enter into contact with them. Only, she does not forget: she has adopted their consciousness but she remains in relation with her own real, supreme consciousness. And thus, by joining the two, she can make those who are in that other consciousness progress. But if she did not adopt their consciousness, if she did not suffer with their sorrow, she could not help them. Hers is not a suffering of ignorance: it is a suffering through identity. It is because she has accepted to have the same vibrations as they, in order to be able to enter into contact with them and pull them out of the state they are in. If she did not

enter into contact with them, she would not be felt at all or no one could bear her radiance.... This has been said in all kinds of forms, in all kinds of religions, and they have spoken very often of the divine Sacrifice, but from a certain point of view it is true. It is a voluntary sacrifice, but it is true: giving up a state of perfect consciousness, perfect bliss, perfect power in order to accept the state of ignorance of the outer world so as to pull it out of that ignorance. If this state were not accepted, there would be no contact with it. No relation would be possible. And this is the reason of the incarnations." (CWM 5: 387–388)

LXXXVIII—The Mother's Prayers

1.

"In this calm concentration which comes before daybreak, more than at any other moment, my thought rises to Thee, O Lord of our being, in an ardent prayer.

Grant that this day which is about to dawn may bring to the earth and to men a little more of pure light and true peace; may Thy manifestation be more complete and Thy sweet law more widely recognised; may something higher, nobler, more true be revealed to mankind; may a vaster and deeper love spread abroad so that all painful wounds may be healed; and may this first sunbeam dawning upon the earth be the herald of joy and harmony, a symbol of the glorious splendour hidden in the essence of life." (CWM 1: 37)

2.

"In it more clearly than ever, is revealed the pure and infinite love in which the whole earth is immersed. By this love all lives and is animated; the darkest shadows become almost translucent to let its streams flow through, and the intensest pain is transformed into potent bliss." (CWM 1: 295)

LXXXIX—When Sri Aurobindo Was in Possession of Supramental Power, He Could Perfectly Heal Pain

1.

"He [Sri Aurobindo] himself used to say that when he was in possession of the supramental power, when he could use it at will and focus it on a specific point with a definite purpose, it was irrevocable, inevitable: the effect was absolute. That can be called a miracle.

For example, take someone who was sick or in pain; when Sri Aurobindo was in possession of this supramental power—there was a time when he said that it was completely under his control, that is, he could do what he wanted with it, he could apply it where he liked—then he would apply this Will, for example, to some disorder, either physical or vital or, of course, mental—he would apply this force of greater harmony, of greater order, this supramental force, and focus it there, and it would act immediately. And it was an order: it created an order, a harmony greater than the natural harmony. That is, if it was a case of healing, for example, the healing would be more perfect and more complete than any obtained by ordinary physical and mental methods.

There were a great many of them. But people are so blind, so embedded in their ordinary consciousness that they always give 'explanations', they can always give an explanation. Only those who have faith and aspiration and

something very pure in themselves, that is, who truly want to know, they were able to perceive it." (CWM 10: 159)

2.

"And things are very closely interdependent: I also saw the case when someone came to him with an acute pain somewhere: 'Oh, it hurts here! Oh, it hurts! Oh!...' He said nothing, he remained calm, he looked at the person, and I saw, I saw something like a subtle physical hand which came and took hold of the little point dancing about in disorder and confusion, and he took it like this (*same gesture*) and there, everything had gone.

'Oh, oh! Look my pain has gone.' (CWM: 9: 253–254)

XC—Sri Aurobindo's Experiments with Pain Giving Ananda

1.

"Experiments made with the body show that below a certain intensity all pain now gives ananda of bhoga at the time of the feeling of pain, & pain beyond that degree brings it after the immediate acuteness has passed." (CWSA 10: 47)

2.

"Pain is being given in the body, so that the discomfort of pain may by the habit of bhoga pass away. Pain will continue to be given henceforth till this aim is effected." (CWSA 10: 52)

3.

"The most important development was the confirmation of raudrananda [force of delight], pain being now invariably attended with pleasure. Formerly only the dull kinds of pain had this attribute, but now it has extended to those which are acute, although the intensity has not yet gone in experience beyond a certain degree." (CWSA 10: 60)

4.

"The first chatusthaya is now acting in its completeness by completeness of samata & the hasyam no longer depends on mangala upalabdhi. The body is also being possessed

by samata & universal ananda even in what was formerly mere pain or discomfort." (CWSA 10: 87)

5.

"Certain contacts once painful are losing their discomfort in the raudra vishayananda . . Kamananda appears in increasing force. There are now only a few categories of events which create a mixed ananda or recall the old reactions of depression & recoil." (CWSA 10: 125)

6.

"The discomfort touches but is easily extruded by substituting the ananda of the discomfort. Discomfort of roga still exists when it is yielded to, but is attended always with ananda of the sensation or else with ananda of the discomfort, unless the opposite, nirananda, is encouraged. Discomfort of acute pain is still the one thing not yet really mastered by the Ananda, but that defect has been purposely left for gradual & later extrusion; even this discomfort is up to a certain point attended by ananda or replaced by ananda & overcomes, usually, only on the first sudden & unexpected attack when the Chit in the system is off its guard." (CWSA 10: 200)

7.

"Pain has turned into some form of ananda except in extreme touches, eg burning by fire, blows touching the bone, etc; but here it is only the immediate contact that is

painful, the after effect is always anandamaya; in some touches, eg mosquito bite the habit of discomfort still continues, but is now occasional and not a dharma of the body. Pain of events is the one asamata of mind still persisting & then only as asamata of failure; this too is occasional, largely artificial and no longer a dharma of the mind." (CWSA 10: 244)

8.

"This is the state of the seventh chatusthaya.

…

In the Ananda (bhukti) the pure discomfort of harsh sounds & ugly faces etc is removed; smell, taste, touch are all come into line, taste a little forward & possessing a superior perfection; only pain beyond a certain degree is empty of the ananda, although even sharp pain leaves behind it ananda as its physical result." (CWSA 10: 308)

9.

"*Bhukti*

The discomfort of cold & heat is rapidly becoming ananda. The element of discomfort has to be eliminated. Pain alone will

remain, then, as a negative element in the bhukti. The discomfort of roga is intermediary between pain & physical discomfort of the nervous system." (CWSA 10: 310)

10.

"The positive samata of the sight is established in rasagrahana and bhoga of the bhukti; the ananda varies. Taste & sight are now well established and touch in all but strong painful touches or touches of persistent discomfort." (CWSA 10: 318)

11.

"Strong pain given to the system (burning in the eyelids by the flaming tip of a match, and muscular pain of indigestion in the breast & back) showed that the sparshas habitual[ly] causing pain can no longer entirely shut out ananda, even when they are very powerful, but can temporarily overpower them." (CWSA 10: 328–329)

12.

"The sadhana of pleasure in pain continues and the success is general, but not yet complete in the intenser touches." (CWSA 10: 333)

13.

"All ordinary discomfort has now been invested with the ananda. Only the strong touches of pain remain to be conquered. Here dull pain even if strong & persistent offers little difficulty; acute pain beyond a certain degree still exceeds the titiksha & therefore passes beyond the scale of ananda." (CWSA 10: 380)

14.

"In the body (vital) wine of ananda is once more physically felt, but curiously enough in movements of pain as well as of ananda." (CWSA 10: 392)

15.

"Ananda of physical pain has once more commenced; it is noticeable that pain of burning, pain of blows, nervous or muscular pain of disease, even pain of pressure are associated up to a certain degree with ananda simultaneous or subsequent in manifestation, but pain of wounds, touches on the raw flesh etc is less amenable & except in the ant's bite is as yet entirely divorced from ananda." (CWSA 10: 407)

16.

"Today ananda of the painful touch on exposed flesh began, but did not go very far." (CWSA 10: 410)

17.

"Even violent & prolonged pain as well as violent & prolonged discomfort are now capable of Ananda; but this siddhi has yet to be generalised. If generalised it will be the first effectuality of the physical mukti." (CWSA 10: 437–438)

18.

"Ananda of acute pain has again been tested with favourable results." (CWSA 10: 440)

19.

"Ananda of battle & defeat established firmly in its generality, no longer in type or particular instance.

Strong & continued oppressive pain between the lungs & navel as of approaching death, continued for nearly an hour. Borne at first with passive ananda, it became at last nirananda & had to be expelled by a constant pressure of the Will accompanied by rapid breathing and swallowing of amrita in the saliva. Not the element of pain, but the element of discomfort overpowered the ananda for the reason that the element of pain appeals only to the body & the mind can accept or reject it easily; but the element of discomfort working direct on the prana & obstructing it troubles the mind in prana & dissociation is less easy." (CWSA 10: 442)

20.

"Subjective ananda is almost perfect as positive samata, but not in intensity of positive ecstasy (rabhas, radhas).

Generality of objective ananda is now being restored; but intensities of physical pain still escape the grasp of the Ananda." (CWSA 10: 485)

21.

"12. *It is egoism that obstructs delight*
13 *Desire is the badge of egoistic delight*
14 *It is the edge of egoistic delight that opens the soul to selftorture.*
15. *Self-torture is the sense of all pain.*
16 *All pain is the deflection of delight; suffering of delight is translated into suffering of self-torture.*
17. *It is the capacity of suffering that determines the capacity of delight.*" (CWSA 10: 537)

22.

"*Ananda*
Raudrananda. All dull pain even long continued is now Ananda. Also all acute pain & acute discomfort not long continued,
even those proper to disease." (CWSA 10: 597)

23.

"Subjective Ananda is completed; physical Ananda is being added. Sudden pain of burning has at last become Ananda Prolonged intensity of pain has also to become Ananda.." (CWSA 10: 633)

24.

"*Ananda.*
Movements of pain & discomfort formerly acute are now giving Ananda." (CWSA 10: 725)

25.

"*Ananda*

The acute continued pain in the muscles recurring & sometimes almost constantly for nearly half an hour came as ananda to the psychic prana and to the physical as pain in which it took & felt pleasure. To a part of the physical prana it was pure ananda.

The liberty of the body in ananda is therefore assured, even already gained and has only to be applied uniformly.

Unexpected pain usually used to surprise the body with the negation of ananda; now even unexpected pain comes as ananda, though to a less degree than watched or anticipated pain." (CWSA 10: 728)

26.

"*Samata*

Universal *samata* has been finally confirmed and the reactions of *asamata* imposed from outside are now taken up by the Ananda.

In the body there are still movements & reactions of discomfort & *nirananda*, but these also are now being taken up. Even the pain of burning is pursued by the Ananda and generally accompanied by it." (CWSA 11: 832)

27.

"Physical samata and Ananda of pain & discomfort are also being finally confirmed. Touches which formerly overcame the Titiksha, are now anandamaya." (CWSA 11: 844–845)

28.

"In pain even when intolerable there seems always now to be a basis and content of Ananda; it is only the skin, as it were, of the contact that still preserves the memory of mere pain. This is at least true up to a certain & a high degree of intensity." (CWSA 11: 894)

29.

"The working of turning all pain and discomfort into raudra ananda is proceeding. Much sharper and stronger touches than
before have become anandamaya." (CWSA 11: 932)

30.

"The degree of pain intensity from bahyaspars at which ananda is possible has been sensibly raised, so much that it promises even complete siddhi of every touch short of those which break, cut, rack or crush the body." (CWSA 11: 934)

31.

"Prolonged intensity of pain (internal, ahaituka and sahaituka) no longer overpowers the ananda; it increases

it, merges into it or turns into it. Also pain is now seldom separate from the ananda; it does not come and cause it whether at the moment of the touch or after the touch has seized it, but is amalgamated with it. It is either anandamaya pain or pain-ananda or pure raudra ananda. Even in strong pain from outside touches, eg burning, this tends to be the rule. The old separation is only an occasional survival. Discomfort is following the same rule, but has not gone so far towards absorption." (CWSA 11: 951)

32.

"Intense pain, other than burning, now often not only takes on the character of ananda but keeps it when prolonged. It is noticeable however that pointed, lancing pain is easier to deal with than the long-edged and the long-edged easier than the massed. Also the nervous is easier to transform than the gross physical produced by a physical object." (CWSA 11: 1015)

33.

"Ananda of discomfort is not yet universalised. Ananda of pain still subject to limitation by degree, but much less than before." (CWSA 11: 1020)

34.

"Above a certain point, the first impression is pain, though ananda immediately intervenes and takes possession. In

subsequent effects pain mingles, but the tendency is for ananda to prevail. The general receptive attitude of the physical being is anandamaya and this is rapidly prevailing." (CWSA 11: 1031)

35.

"Pain and discomfort are being strongly taken up by the Ananda. Today all pain and discomfort, the former even very acute and of some little persistence, the latter massive and oppressive, were permeated with Ananda." (CWSA 11: 1101)

36.

"The persistence of the Ananda is now perfect; its continuity is assured but not perfect. The continuity has to become perfect. Afterwards the intensity will of itself increase. This is not indriya. It is manas in the physical prana. That cannot be purified all at once. Pain & discomfort of the body will therefore last, not in the indriyas, but this pain & discomfort must be increasingly associated with ananda, become a form of ananda & finally transmute into ananda." (CWSA 11: 1295)

37.

Experiences of Sri Aurobindo in Alipur Jail
1908 – 1909

Pain and Ananda

"As for divine rapture, a knock on head or foot or elsewhere *can* be received with the physical Ananda of pain or pain + Ananda or pure physical Ananda—for I have often, quite involuntarily, made the experiment myself and passed with honours. It began, by the way, as far back as in Alipur jail when I got bitten in my cell by some very red and ferocious looking warrior ants and found to my surprise that pain and pleasure are conventions of our senses. But I do not expect that unusual reaction from others. … In any case, this way of having rapture is better off the list and the Lilliputian doorway [*against which the correspondent bumped himself*] was not a happy contrivance." (CWSA 35: 263)

XCI—Other Quotations on Pain

1.

"Love's arrow never pains while in the wound—it is too subtle and flower-like—if a lover is in pain, it is because he loves himself more than Love—and that is the fault of Nature, not of Eros. Again Love has been painted as blind; and in this too the poets of Europe have conceived a lyrical fiction; for they say that Love looses his shafts and knows not whom they strike, whereas indeed he knows too well. It is his delight to unite those who should never have so much as met and to blind them to their own misery until the shefali arrow has withered in their hearts; and this he does with eyes open and of deliberate purpose." (CWSA 1: 5)

2.

"The divine splendour of Bengali youths is clearly shining forth. The divine element has manifested itself. As soon as Government removes one, one hundred others take his place. Every Bengali patriot feels inclined to sacrifice his own self for the good of thirty crores of people. This idea ought to spread throughout the country. The misery of the Indian nation must be looked upon as the misery of everyone, and the pleasure of the nation must be regarded by him as his own. One ought to feel pride in bearing pain

and anguish. To suffer such pangs is to repay one's debt to the nation." (CWSA 7: 860)

3.

"The self-respect of the nation is our religion, self-sacrifice is our only action or duty. We ought to give proper scope for the divine qualities in us to shine forth. Trifling emotions ought to be given up. Do not be afraid even if you are required to die. Do not retreat; bear pain for the sake of the nation. God is your support. If you do this, the Indian nation will, in an instant, get back its former splendour and glory. It will take its place at the side of the independent nations of the world; it will educate other nations; it will shed the lustre of true knowledge, and it will inculcate the principles of Vedanta." (CWSA 7: 860)

4.

"65. Because God is invincibly great, He can afford to be weak; because He is immutably pure, He can indulge with impunity in sin; He knows eternally all delight, therefore He tastes also the delight of pain; He is inalienably wise, therefore He has not debarred Himself from folly." Thoughts and Aphorisms (CWSA 12: 430)

5.

"463. God has so arranged life that the world is the soul's husband; Krishna its divine paramour. We owe a debt of service to the world and are bound to it by a law, a

compelling opinion, and a common experience of pain and pleasure, but our heart's worship and our free and secret joy are for our Lover." Thoughts and Aphorisms (CWSA 12: 487)

6.

"495. I swore that I would not suffer from the world's grief and the world's stupidity and cruelty & injustice and I made my heart as hard in endurance as the nether millstone and my mind as a polished surface of steel. I no longer suffered, but enjoyment had passed away from me. Then God broke my heart and ploughed up my mind. I rose through cruel & incessant anguish to a blissful painlessness and through sorrow and indignation & revolt to an infinite knowledge and a settled peace." Thoughts and Aphorisms (CWSA 12: 492–493)

7.

"523. A healthy mind hates pain; for the desire of pain that men sometimes develop in their minds is morbid and contrary to Nature. But the soul cares not for the mind & its sufferings any more than the iron-master for the pain of the ore in the furnace; it follows its own necessities and its own hunger." Thoughts and Aphorisms (CWSA 12: 496)

8.

"525. Self-pity is always born of self-love; but pity for others is not always born of love for its object. It is

sometimes a self-regarding shrinking from the sight of pain; sometimes the rich man's contemptuous dole to the pauper. Develop rather God's divine compassion than human pity." Thoughts and Aphorisms (CWSA 12: 497)

9.

"532. "See God everywhere and be not frightened by masks. Believe that all falsehood is truth in the making or truth in the breaking, all failure an effectuality concealed, all weakness strength hiding itself from its own vision, all pain a secret & violent ecstasy. If thou believest firmly & unweariedly, in the end thou wilt see & experience the All-true, Almighty & All-blissful." Thoughts and Aphorisms (CWSA 12: 497)

10.

"If you are *nirdvandva*, you can be *niḥspṛha*, but hardly otherwise, for every dvandva creates in the mind by the very nature of the mind some form of *rāgadveṣa*, like and dislike, attraction and repulsion, whether they are the lowest dualities that appeal to the mind through the body, hunger and thirst, heat and cold, physical pleasure and pain, or the middle sorts that appeal to it through the feelings and desires, success and failure, victory and defeat, fortune and misfortune, pleasure and displeasure, joy and grief, hate and love, or the highest which appeal

to the mind through the discriminating buddhi, virtue and sin, reason and unreason, error and truth." (CWSA 13: 83)

11.

"Wherever thou seest a great end, be sure of a great beginning. Where a monstrous and painful destruction appals thy mind, console it with the certainty of a large and great creation. God is there not only in the still small voice, but in the fire and in the whirlwind." *Thoughts and Glimpses* (CWSA 13: 209)

12.

"Buddha did not weep when he saw the suffering of the world; he went forth to save. And surely such a soul will not grieve over the buffets the outward world seems to give to his outward self; for how can He grieve who is all his Universe? The pain of his petty personal Self is no more to his consciousness than the pain of a crushed ant to a king as he walks musing in his garden bearing on his shoulders the destiny of nations. He cannot feel sorrow for himself even if he would, for he has the sorrow of a whole world to relieve; his own joy is nothing to him, for he has the joy of the whole Universe at his command." (CWSA 17: 146)

13.

"And when the evolution of Mind is complete and the evolution of Supra-Intelligence proceeds, the liberation of

the Will involved in its operations will lead man to the highest evolution of all when he realizes himself as a potent and scient Will, master of creation and not its slave, whose infinite delight in its own existence is lifted far beyond the thraldom of pain and pleasure and uses them with as unalloyed a pleasure as the poet when he weaves joy and sorrow, delight and pain and love and fear and horror into one perfect and pleasurable masterpiece or the painter when he mixes his colours and blends light and shade to create a wedded harmony of form and hue. This state of unfettered Will and infinite Delight once realized, he cannot fail to know his real Self, absolute and calm, omnipotent and pure, the eternal Brahman in whom this evolution has its root and resting-place." (CWSA 17: 243–244)

14.

"Since, then, eternal and immutable delight of being moving out into infinite and variable delight of becoming is the root of the whole matter, we have to conceive one indivisible conscious Being behind all our experiences supporting them by its inalienable delight and effecting by its movement the variations of pleasure, pain and neutral indifference in our sensational existence." (CWSA 21: 111)

15.

"There is after death a period in which one passes through the vital world and lives there for a time. It is only the first

part of this transit that can be dangerous or painful; in the rest one works out, under certain surroundings, a remnant of the vital desires and instincts which one had in the body. As soon as one is tired of these and able to go beyond, the vital sheath is dropped and the soul, after a little time needed to get rid of some mental survivals, passes into a state of rest in the psychic world and remains there till the next life on earth." (CWSA 28: 529)

16.

"As for the dream of the cobras it could be taken as an answer to your complaints against the Divine being grim and solemn and refusing to play and your remark that if you could have the faith that the troubles were a part of the Divine plan leading you through them to the Divine, you would be more at ease. The answer of the symbolic experience was that the Divine can play if you know how to play with him—and bear his play on your shoulders; the cobras and the bite indicate that what seems to you in the vital painful and dangerous may be the very means of bringing you the ecstasy of the Divine Presence." (CWSA 30: 141)

17.

"It is not the soul but the vital or rather something in it that takes pleasure in groaning and weeping and in fact in sorrow and suffering of all kinds." (CWSA 31: 178)

18.

"A glory and a rapture and a charm,
The All-Blissful sat unknown within the heart;
Earth's pains were the ransom of its prisoned delight." (CWSA 33: 43)

19.

"The Eternal's stillness saw in unmoved joy
His universal Power at work display
In plots of pain and dramas of delight
The wonder and beauty of her will to be.
All, even pain, was the soul's pleasure here;
Here all experience was a single plan,
The thousandfold expression of the One." (CWSA 33: 95–96)

20.

"A Nature throbbing with a Heart divine
Was felt in the unconscious universe;
It made the breath a happy mystery.
A love that bore the cross of pain with joy
Eudaemonised the sorrow of the world,
Made happy the weight of long unending Time,
The secret caught of God's felicity."
CANTO II: *The Adoration of the Divine Mother* (CWSA 33: 312–313)

21.

"This seed-self sown in the Indeterminate
Forfeits its glory of divinity,
Concealing the omnipotence of its Force,
Concealing the omniscience of its Soul;
An agent of its own transcendent Will,
It merges knowledge in the inconscient deep;
Accepting error, sorrow, death and pain,
It pays the ransom of the ignorant Night,
Redeeming by its substance Nature's fall." (CWSA 33: 331)

22.

"Too little the strength that now with us is born,
Too faint the light that steals through Nature's lids,
Too scant the joy with which she buys our pain." (CWSA 33: 342)

23.

Savitri entered into the inner worlds with pain and forced her way through body to the soul

"Unshaken her will pressed on the rigid bars:
The gate swung wide with a protesting jar,
The opponent Powers withdrew their dreadful guard;
Her being entered into the inner worlds.
In a narrow passage, the subconscient's gate,
She breathed with difficulty and pain and strove

To find the inner self concealed in sense.
Into a dense of subtle Matter packed,
A cavity filled with a blind mass of power,
An opposition of misleading gleams,
A heavy barrier of unseeing sight,
She forced her way through body to the soul." (CWSA 34: 489)

24.

Madonna of suffering, Mother of grief divine

"The Mother of the seven sorrows bore
The seven stabs that pierced her bleeding heart:
The beauty of sadness lingered on her face,
Her eyes were dim with the ancient stain of tears.
…
I am in all that suffers and that cries.
Mine is the prayer that climbs in vain from earth,
I am traversed by my creatures' agonies,
I am the spirit in a world of pain.
…
I have shared the toil of the yoked animal drudge
Pushed by the goad, encouraged by the whip;
I have shared the fear-filled life of bird and beast,
Its long hunt for the day's precarious food,
Its covert slink and crouch and hungry prowl,
Its pain and terror seized by beak and claw.

…
I have been pity, leaning over pain
And the tender smile that heals the wounded heart
And sympathy making life less hard to bear.
…
Yet have I cried not out against his will,
Yet have I not accused his cosmic Law.
Only to change this great hard world of pain
A patient prayer has risen from my breast;
A pallid resignation lights my brow,
Within me a blind faith and mercy dwell;
I carry the fire that never can be quenched
And the compassion that supports the suns.
I am the hope that looks towards my God,
My God who never came to me till now;
His voice I hear that ever says 'I come':
I know that one day he shall come at last'." (CWSA 34: 503–505)

25.

The Man of Sorrows

"Answering her pathos of divine complaint
A voice of wrath took up the dire refrain,
A growl of thunder or roar of angry beast,
The beast that crouching growls within man's depths,—
Voice of a tortured Titan once a God.

"I am the Man of Sorrows, I am he
Who is nailed on the wide cross of the universe;
To enjoy my agony God built the earth,
My passion he has made his drama's theme.
He has sent me naked into his bitter world
And beaten me with his rods of grief and pain
That I might cry and grovel at his feet
And offer him worship with my blood and tears.
…
If once the Titan's strength could wake in me,
If Enceladus from Etna could arise,
I then would reign the master of the world
And like a god enjoy man's bliss and pain." (CWSA 34: 505–507)

26.

Savitri's Reply

"And Savitri heard the voice, the echo heard
And turning to her being of pity spoke:
'Madonna of suffering, Mother of grief divine,
Thou art a portion of my soul put forth
To bear the unbearable sorrow of the world.
Because thou art, men yield not to their doom,
But ask for happiness and strive with fate;
Because thou art, the wretched still can hope.
But thine is the power to solace, not to save.

One day I will return, a bringer of strength,
And make thee drink from the Eternal's cup;
His streams of force shall triumph in thy limbs
And Wisdom's calm control thy passionate heart.
Thy love shall be the bond of humankind,
Compassion the bright key of Nature's acts:
Misery shall pass abolished from the earth;
The world shall be freed from the anger of the Beast,
From the cruelty of the Titan and his pain.
There shall be peace and joy for ever more'." (CWSA 34: 507–508)

27.

A laugh was Her return to pleasure and pain

"The Spirit's conscious representative,
God's delegate in our humanity,
Comrade of the universe, the Transcendent's ray,
She had come into the mortal body's room
To play at ball with Time and Circumstance.
A joy in the world her master movement here,
The passion of the game lighted her eyes:
A smile on her lips welcomed earth's bliss and grief,
A laugh was her return to pleasure and pain." (CWSA 34: 526)

28.

His presence leads the rhythms of life that seek for mutual joy in spite of pain

"Let us go through this new world that is the same,
For it is given back, but it is known,
A playing-ground and dwelling-house of God
Who hides himself in bird and beast and man
Sweetly to find himself again by love,
By oneness. His presence leads the rhythms of life
That seek for mutual joy in spite of pain." (CWSA 34: 720)

29.

"These perceptions [the perception of the real Soul which communes, through all things] are kept in the depths of our being as remembrances, and when one of them emerges to the memory, it comes back dressed with the golden garb of Divine Felicity.

What we at first called, in our ignorant perception, suffering and pain, reappears embellished, transformed, glorified, adorned with the same dress of magnificence as that which we had called pleasure and happiness. Indeed, sometimes the splendour of the former memories is even more intense and vast than that of the latter, the joy they give us much more profound and pure." (CWM 2: 169)

30.

"Abu Saïd prayed for a while, then he rose and recited a little poem of his own composition:

Despair not in your grief, for a joyous hour will come and take it all away;

The burning simoon may blow, and yet change into a gentle breeze;

A dark cloud may rise, but it passes away and brings no flood;

A fire may kindle and yet be smothered, leaving chest and casket untouched;

Pain comes but also goes.

Therefore be patient when troubles come, for Time is the father of wonders;

And from the peace of God hope for many blessings to come." (CWM 2: 187)

31.

"You would be more justified to ask me: 'Why are there such cruel children?' That indeed is one of the most dreadful things.... But it is due to unconsciousness. It is because they are not even aware that they are making others suffer. And usually, if care is taken to make them understand—for instance, through experience—then they understand. Children who ill-treat animals (there are many of these)—well, that is because they don't even know that

animals feel as they do. When they are made to understand that when they pinch animals or pull their hair or beat them it gives them pain, and if necessary when they are shown on their own bodies how it hurts, they don't do it any more!" (CWM 6: 5)

32.

"When you represent the possibility of a victory, you always have within you the thing contrary to this victory, which is your perpetual trouble.

Each one has his own difficulty. And I have given the example already once, I think. For instance, a being who must represent fearlessness, courage, you know, a capacity to hold on without giving way before all dangers and all fights, usually somewhere in his being he is a *terrible* coward, and he has to struggle against this almost constantly because this represents the victory he has to win in the world.

It is like a being who ought to be good, full of compassion and generosity; somewhere in his being he is sharp, sour and sometimes even bad; and he has to struggle against this in order to be the other thing. And so on. It goes into *all* the details. It's like that.

And when you see a very black shadow somewhere, *very* black, something that's truly painful, you know, you can be sure that you have in you the possibility of the corresponding light." (CWM 7: 415)

33.

"Repeatedly, in different circumstances, several times, I have had the same memory. It was not exactly the same scene or the same images, because it was not something that I saw, it was *a life* that I was living. For some time, by night or by day, in a certain state of trance I went back to a life that I had lived and had the full consciousness that it was the outflowering of the human form on earth—the first human forms capable of embodying the divine Being. … It was an out-flowering of the joy of living, simply that, in universal love and harmony—flowers, minerals, animals: all were in harmony.
harmony.

It was only long afterwards—but this is a personal impression—long afterwards that things went wrong. Probably because some mental crystallisations were necessary, inevitable for the general evolution, so that the mind might be prepared to move on to something else. This is where... Faugh! It is like falling into a hole, into ugliness, into obscurity; everything becomes so dark afterwards, so ugly, so difficult, so painful, it is really—it really feels like a fall." (CWM 10: 90–91)

34.

"I must say that it is difficult. [becoming supple but still not lose by individualisation]

From the point of view of thought it [widening] is elementary, very easy. And even from the point of view of feelings, it is not difficult; for the heart, that is, the emotional being, to widen itself to the dimension of the Supreme is relatively easy. But the body! It is very difficult, very difficult without the body losing—how to put it?—its centre of coagulation; without it dissolving into the surrounding mass. And even then, if one were in the midst of Nature with mountains, forests and rivers, and great natural beauty, plenty of space, it would be rather pleasant! But one cannot take a single step materially, out of one's body, without coming across things that are painful. It occasionally happens that one comes in contact with a substance that is pleasing, harmonious, warm, that vibrates with a higher light. But this is rare. Yes, flowers, sometimes flowers—sometimes, not always. But this material world, oh!... You get knocked everywhere—scratched, scratched, scraped, knocked by all kinds of things that *won't unfold*. Oh, how difficult it is! How little human life has blossomed! It is shrivelled up, hardened, without light, without warmth—to say nothing of joy." (CWM 10: 116–117)

35.

"And I have observed this in the cells of the body; they always seem to be in a hurry to do what they have to do, lest they have no time to do it. So they do nothing properly.

Muddled people —some people turn everything upside down, their movements are jerky and confused—have this to a high degree, this kind of haste—quick, quick, quick.... Yesterday, someone was complaining of rheumatic pains and he was saying, 'Oh, it is such a waste of time. I do things so slowly!' I said (*Mother smiles*) , 'So what!' He didn't like it. You see, for someone to complain when he is in pain means that he is soft, that is all; but to say, 'I am wasting so much time, I do things so slowly!' It gave a very clear picture of the haste in which men live. You go hurtling through life... to go where?... You end with a crash!" (CWM 10: 201)

36.

"Something is translated in words (it is without words, but there something is translated in words) and then there are conversations among the cells (*Mother laughs*): 'Imbecile that you are! Why do you have fear? Don't Don't you see it is the Lord himself who is doing this to transform you?' And the other: 'Ah!...' Then it remains quiet, and then opens itself and waits, and then... the pain goes away, the disorder goes away, and everything is put in order." (CWM 11: 101)

37.

"Well, there are moments when the body [of the Mother] would scream in pain and... and just a little, just a little

change, which is almost inexpressible, and the thing becomes bliss—it becomes... the other thing, it becomes this extraordinary thing, the Divine everywhere. And so the body all the while is moving from the one to the other, like a kind of gymnastic, a struggle of the consciousness between the two." (CWM 11: 235)

38.

"The first aim will therefore be to help individuals to become aware of the fundamental genius of the nation to which they belong and at the same time to bring them into contact with the ways of life of other nations, so that they learn to know and respect equally the true spirit of all the countries of the world. For, in order to be real and workable, any world-organisation must be based on this mutual respect and understanding between nation and nation as well as between individual and individual. Only in order and collective organisation, in collaboration based on mutual goodwill, is there any possibility of lifting man out of the painful chaos in which he finds himself now. It is with this aim and in this spirit that all human problems will be studied at the university centre; and the solution to them will be given in the light of the supramental knowledge which Sri Aurobindo has revealed in his writings." (CWM 12: 41–42)

39.

"This world is a chaos in which darkness and light, falsehood and truth, death and life, ugliness and beauty, hate and love are so closely intertwined that it is almost impossible to distinguish one from the other, still more impossible to disentangle them and put an end to an embrace which has the horror of a pitiless struggle, all the more keen because veiled, especially in human consciousness where the conflict changes into an anguish for knowledge, for power, for conquest,—a combat obscure and painful, all the more atrocious because it seems to be without issue, but capable of a solution on a level above the sensations and feelings and ideas, beyond the domain of the mind—in the Divine Consciousness. (CWM 15: 6–7)

40.

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"This is not a prayer, but an encouragement.

Here is the encouragement and a comment upon it:

"At the very moment when everything seems to go from bad to worse, it is then that we must make a supreme act of faith and know that the Grace will never fail us."

The hours before the dawn are always the darkest.

The servitude just before freedom comes is the most painful of all.

But in the heart endowed with faith burns the eternal flame of hope which leaves no room for discouragement." (CWM 15: 177)

41.

"To make use of the nights is an excellent thing. It has a double effect: a negative effect, it prevents you from falling backward, losing what you have gained—that is indeed painful—and a positive effect, you make some progress, you continue your progress. You make use of the night, so there is no trace of fatigue any more.

Two things you must eliminate: falling into the stupor of the inconscience, with all the things of the subconscient and inconscient that rise up, invade you, enter you; and a vital and mental superactivity where you pass your time in fighting, literally, terrible battles. People come out of that state bruised, as if they had received blows. And they did receive them—it is not 'as if'! And I see only one way out: to change the nature of sleep." (CWM 15: 380–381)

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