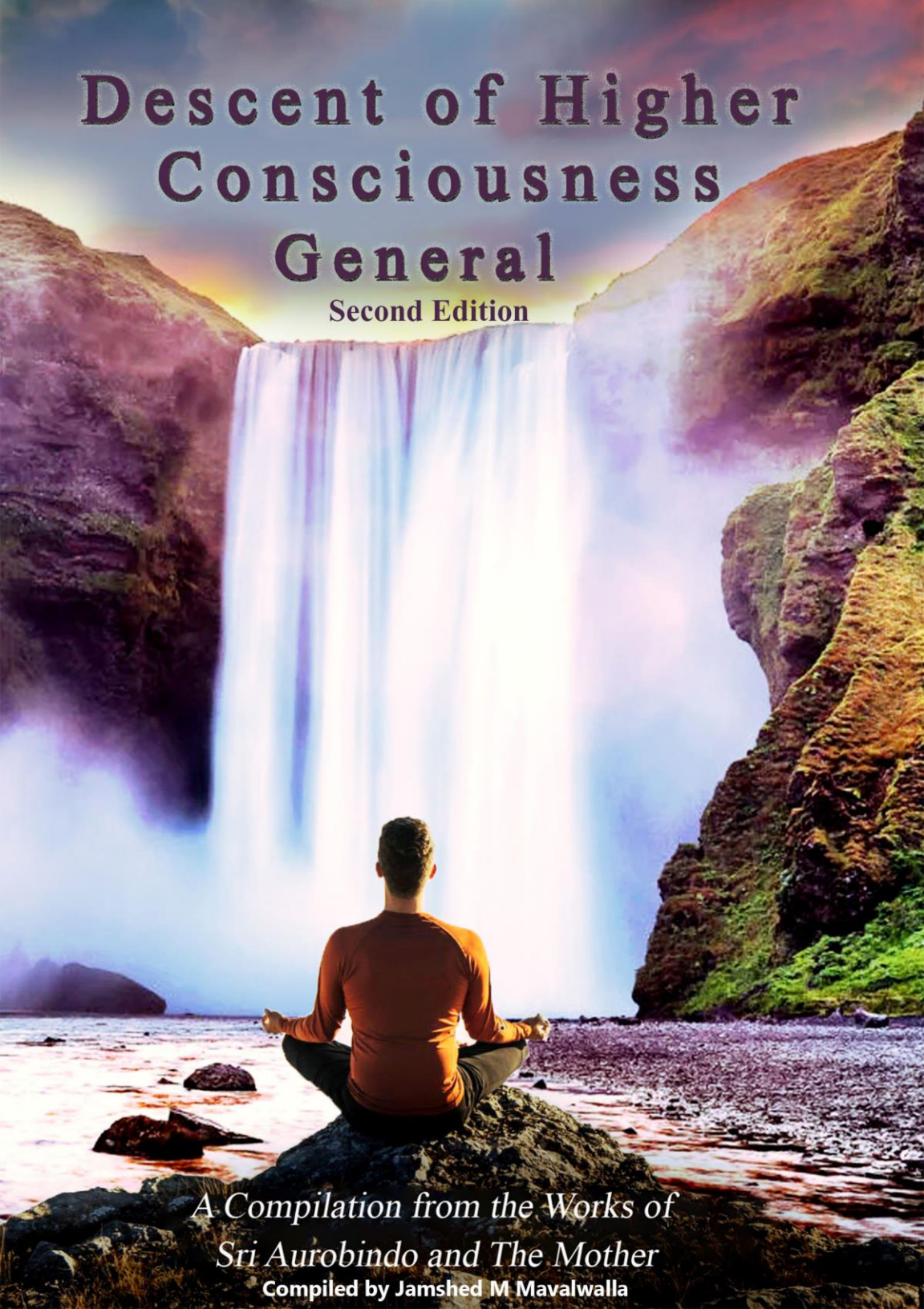
Descent of Higher Consciousness General

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

Descent of Higher Consciousness General

Second Edition

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Waterfall is the symbol of the descent of the divine forces upon the physical plane which is portrayed on the Cover.

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 now bring out a new series of compilations on the topic "Descent of Higher Consciousness in Sadhana." This book, *Descent of Higher Consciousness—General*, is the first volume in this series.

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

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

Jamshed M. Mavalwalla

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I—Integral Yoga's Movement Is of Ascent and Descent

1.

"Our Yoga is a double movement of ascent and descent; one rises to higher and higher levels of consciousness, but at the same time one brings down their power not only into mind and life, but in the end even into the body." (CWSA 29: 376)

2.

"There is a double movement in the sadhana—the Divine Consciousness, Power, Light, Peace descending into all the body, the consciousness from all parts of the body rising upwards to meet the Divine Consciousness above—the descent and the ascent." (CWSA 30: 415–416)

3.

"There are two movements that are necessary—one is the ascent through the increasing of peace and silence to its source above the mind,—that is indicated by the tendency of the consciousness to rise out of the body to the top of the head and above where it is easy to realise the Self in all its stillness and liberation and wideness and to open to the other powers of the Higher Consciousness. The other is the descent of the peace, silence, the spiritual freedom and wideness and the powers of the higher consciousness

as they develop into the lower down to the most physical and even the subconscient." (CWSA 30: 419)

4.

"When the being opens then all in you, the mind (head), emotional being (heart), vital, even something in the physical consciousness begin to ascend in order to join themselves to this greater higher consciousness. One has when one sits with eyes closed in meditation the sensation of going up which you describe. It is called the ascension of the lower consciousness. Afterwards things begin to descend from above, peace, joy, light, strength, knowledge etc. and a great change begins in the nature. This is what we call the descent of the higher (the Mother's) consciousness. The unease you felt was because of the unaccustomed nature of the movement. It is of no importance and quickly goes away." (CWSA 30: 385)

5.

"The lower consciousness ascends towards the higher to join it—the higher descends into the lower to transform it. It is the rule of the consciousness in this sadhana." (CWSA 30: 417)

6.

"There is no fixed rule in such things. With many the descent comes first and the ascension afterwards, with

others it is the other way; with some the two processes go on together. If one can fix oneself above so much the better." (CWSA 30: 419)

7.

"I think the descent is more usual than the ascent. Some sadhaks finish the ascent first or ascents and descents but more often the descents come first and the ascent (above the head) takes place only when there has been much working of peace, force, Ananda etc. in the body." (CWSA 30: 419–420)

8.

"The movement of ascension cannot finish so long as the movement of descent is not ready to finish." (CWSA 30: 420)

9.

"Sri Aurobindo cannot undertake to guide you as your Guru, for the reason that he takes as disciples only those who follow his special path of Yoga; your experiences follow a different line. In his Yoga there may be an occasional current in the spine as in other nerve channels or different parts of the body, but no awakening of the Kundalini in this particular and powerful fashion. There is only a quiet uprising of the consciousness from the lower centres to join the spiritual consciousness above and a

descent of the Divine Force from above which does its own work in the mind and body—the manner and stages varying in each sadhak. A perfect confidence in the Divine Mother and a vigilance to repel all wrong suggestions and influences is the main law of this Yoga." (CWSA 29: 462)

This letter was written by Sri Aurobindo in the third person and sent to the enquirer through his secretary.

10.

"In Yoga we replace this confused crooked crab-motion by a rapid, conscious and self-directed evolution which is planned to carry us, as far as can be, in a straight line towards the goal set before us. In a certain sense it may be an error to speak of a goal anywhere in a progression which may well be infinite. Still we can conceive of an immediate goal, an ulterior objective beyond our present achievement towards which the soul in man can aspire. There lies before him the possibility of a new birth; there can be an ascent into a higher and wider plane of being and its descent to transform his members. An enlarged and illumined consciousness is possible that shall make of him a liberated spirit and a perfected force—and, if spread beyond the individual, it might even constitute a divine humanity or else a new, a supramental and therefore a superhuman race. It is this new birth that we make our aim: a growth into a divine consciousness is the whole meaning of our Yoga, an integral conversion to divinity not

only of the soul but of all the parts of our nature." (CWSA 23: 90)

11.

"The practice of this Yoga [*Integral Yoga*] is double—one side is of an ascent of the consciousness to the higher planes, the other is of a descent of the power of the higher planes into the earth consciousness so as to drive out the Power of darkness and ignorance and transform the nature." (CWSA 30: 416)

12.

"I do not see what is your difficulty. That there is a divine force asleep or veiled by Inconscience in Matter and that the Higher Force has to descend and awaken it with the Light and Truth is a thing that is well known; it is at the very base of this [*Integral*] Yoga." (CWSA 30: 497)

II—Opening Upwards

1.

"It must be noted however that the opening upward does not necessarily lead to peace, silence and Nirvana only. The sadhak becomes aware not only of a great, eventually an infinite peace, silence, wideness above us, above the head as it were and extending into all physical and supraphysical space, but also he can become aware of other things—a vast Force in which is all power, a vast Light in which is all knowledge, a vast Ananda in which is all bliss and rapture. At first they appear as something essential, indeterminate, absolute, simple, *kevala*; a Nirvana into any of these things seems possible. But we can come to see too that this Force contains all forces, this Light all lights, this Ananda all joy and bliss possible. And all this can descend into us. Any of them and all of them can come down, not peace alone; only the safest is to bring down first an absolute calm and peace for that makes the descent of the rest more secure; otherwise it may be difficult for the external nature to contain or bear so much Force, Light, Knowledge or Ananda. All these things together make what we call the higher, spiritual or divine consciousness. The psychic opening through the heart puts us primarily into connection with the individual Divine, the Divine in his inner relations with us; it is especially the source of love and bhakti. This upward opening puts us

into direct relation with the whole Divine and can create in us the divine consciousness and a new birth or births of the spirit." (CWSA 30: 326–327)

2.

"It is the beginning of a very decisive experience and realisation—first, the Ascent above the mind (head) into the spiritual plane. It is here that one releases and is released into the vastness, fullness, solace, freedom, peace and joy of the Infinite and becomes aware of the universal Self and the Divine. Its realisation is the foundation (when it is fixed and when one rises constantly above the body in the wideness of the infinite Being) of the spiritual state and the beginning of the spiritual transformation of the nature. … The ascent is the liberation (mukti) and when once this ascends, one is liberated from the body consciousness, one no longer feels the body as a form, no longer feels contained in the body, but widens out into the formless Vastness of the Divine. Or sometimes the body is felt as something very small in this vastness." (CWSA 30: 426)

3.

"But that liberation and transcendence need not necessarily impose a disappearance, a sheer dissolving cut from the manifestation; it can prepare a liberation into action of the highest Knowledge and an intensity of Power that can transform the world and fulfil the evolutionary

urge. It is an ascent from which the return is no longer a fall but a winged or self-sustained descent of light, force and Ananda." (CWSA 28: 259)

4.

"Rising higher and higher and bringing down is the method of the Yoga; but it is not possible to do it with full effect until one has so prepared oneself that one can rise above the head to the Self in the higher mind. It was the point you had reached but could not confirm before the difficulties came in from the physical consciousness." (CWSA 30: 424–425)

III—Call Down the Divine Influence into Us

1.

"In this Yoga the whole principle is to open oneself to the Divine Influence. It is there above you and, if you can once become conscious of it, you have then to call it down into you. It descends into the mind and into the body as Peace, as a Light, as a Force that works, as the Presence of the Divine with or without form, as Ananda. Before one has this consciousness, one has to have faith and aspire for the opening. Aspiration, call, prayer are forms of one and the same thing and are all effective; you can take the form that comes to you or is easiest to you." (CWSA 29: 106)

2.

"Our aim is to bring the secret forces out and unwalled into the open so that instead of getting some shadows or lightnings of themselves out through the veil or being wholly obstructed, they may 'pour down' and 'flow in a river'. But to expect that all at once is a presumptuous demand which shows an impatient ignorance and inexperience." (CWSA 29: 184)

3.

"The Higher Consciousness is there already—it depends on the sadhak how much (or little) he receives of it and in what way. … It is a question of receiving, not of calling

down, for that each has to open—by whatever degrees—and call it into himself." (CWSA 35: 325)

4.

"But, what is most important for us, is that it manifests as a transcending Light, Knowledge, Power, Purity, Peace, Ananda of which we become aware above and which descends into the being and progressively replaces the ordinary consciousness by its own movements ..." (CWSA 29: 498)

5.

"Presence, Peace, Force, Light, Ananda, these are five things that most commonly come down." (CWSA 30: 449)

IV—Descent Is One of the Sovereign Ways of the Yoga-Siddhi

1.

"Yet it is the truth that all that belongs to the higher consciousness comes from above, not only the spiritual peace and silence, but the Light, the Power, the Knowledge, the higher seeing and thought, the Ananda come from above. It is also possible that up to a certain point they may come from within, but this is because the psychic being is open to them directly and they come first there and then reveal themselves in the rest of the being from the psychic or by its coming into the front. A disclosure from within or a descent from above are the two sovereign ways of the Yoga-siddhi. An effort of the external surface mind or emotions, a tapasya of some kind may seem to build up something of these things, but the results are usually uncertain and fragmentary compared to the result of the two radical ways. That is why in this Yoga we insist always on an 'opening'—an opening inwards of the inner mind, vital, physical to the inmost part of us, the psychic, and an opening upwards to what is above the mind—as indispensable for the fruits of the sadhana." (CWSA 30: 324)

2.

"Your own experience of it was, you say, that of an irruption of the Infinite into the finite—of a greater Power

descending upon you or uplifting you to itself. That indeed is what it is always to the spiritual experience—and that is why I speak of it as the Transcendent. It reveals itself as such a descending and uplifting Power or a descending and uplifting Love—or Light, Peace, Bliss, Consciousness, Presence; it is not limited by its manifestation in the finite,—one feels it, the Peace, the Power, Love, Light or Bliss or the Presence in which all these are, to be a self-existent infinity, not something constituted by or limited to our first sight of it here. … But once this irruption has taken place, this descent and uplifting, that is bound to become in the end the one thing real, for by that alone can the rest find its own lasting greater reality. It is the descent of the Divine Consciousness and the ascent or uplifting into it of which we speak in our Yoga." (CWSA 28: 373)

3.

"Q: *X, who was a residential disciple of yours at Pondicherry but came here some months back, is a neighbour and a friend of mine. Under his instruction, I have been practising sadhana for a few months. I concentrate in the heart. Concentrating at this place for some time, I feel a descent first and then an ascent of a force within me. At first this was very irregular. Now I am having this descent and ascent regularly. I feel a power descending within me, then after one or two or sometimes three minutes, I feel it ascending and going above the head*

and the same upward and downward movements go on in cyclic order. I do not practise more than one hour daily. When the descent and ascent go on, the concentration at a certain place does not become necessary or rather my personal attempt of concentration stops or hampers the movements. In such a state, I keep myself vacant and watch the movements listlessly and keep off the passing thoughts that sometimes come. I feel calmness, quietude and vastness within me.

A: Accepted as disciple. As long as the calmness, quietude and vastness lasts, a special concentration need not be continued. The special concentration is intended to bring the experience—during the experience the attitude of witness should be kept with rejection of anything that might disturb the experience. Listlessness [Lethargy] however is not the proper poise of the witness but rather a still quietude." (CWSA 35: 549–550)

4.

"But, again, a mere escape into some absolute Transcendence leaves personality unfulfilled and the universal action inconclusive and cannot satisfy the integral seeker. He feels that the Truth that is for ever is a Power that creates as well as a stable Existence; it is not a Power solely of illusory or ignorant manifestation. The eternal Truth can manifest its truths in Time; it can create in

Knowledge and not only in Inconscience and Ignorance. A divine Descent no less than an ascent to the Divine is possible; there is a prospect of the bringing down of a future perfection and a present deliverance. As his knowledge widens, it becomes for him more and more evident that it was this for which the Master of Works cast down the soul within him here as a spark of his fire into the darkness, that it might grow there into a centre of the Light that is for ever." (CWSA 23: 259)

5.

"Some of these images [that the psychic being is as though shut up in a kind of hard shell, a prison, and that this is what prevents it from manifesting outwardly] are very common to all those who have had the experience. For example, when one goes down into the depths of one's being to find the psychic right at the bottom of one's consciousness, there is this image of descending into a deep well, going down deeper and deeper, descending, and it is as though one were truly sinking into a well.

Naturally all these are analogies; but they are associations with the experience of impressions which give a great deal of force and concrete reality to the experience." (CWM 7: 267)

V—Yoga Shakti Force Is Waiting to Manifest

1.

"Yoga means union with the Divine—a union either transcendental (above the universe) or cosmic (universal) or individual or, as in our Yoga, all three together. Or it means getting into a consciousness in which one is no longer limited by the small ego, personal mind, personal vital and body but is in union with the supreme Self or with the universal (cosmic) consciousness or with some deeper consciousness within in which one is aware of one's own soul, one's own inner being and of the real truth of existence. In the Yogic consciousness one is not only aware of things, but of forces, not only of forces but of the conscious being behind the forces. One is aware of all this not only in oneself but in the universe.

There is a force which accompanies the growth of the new consciousness and at once grows with it and helps it to come about and to perfect itself. This force is the Yoga shakti. It is here asleep and coiled up in all the centres of our inner being (chakras) and is at the base what is called in the Tantras the Kundalini shakti. But it is also above us, above our head as the Divine Force—not there coiled up, involved, asleep, but awake, scient [*most knowledgeable*], potent, extended and wide; it is there waiting for manifestation and to this Force we have to open ourselves—to the power of the Mother. In the mind it

manifests itself as a divine mind-force or a universal mind-force and it can do everything that the personal mind cannot do; it is then the Yogic mind force. When it manifests and works in the vital or physical in the same way, it is then apparent as a Yogic life-force or a Yogic body-force. It can awake in all these forms, bursting outwards and upwards, extending itself into wideness from below; or it can descend and become there a definite power for things; it can pour downwards into the body, working, establishing its reign, extending into wideness from above, link the lowest in us with the highest above us, release the individual into a cosmic universality or into absoluteness and transcendence." (CWSA 30: 422) (CWSA 32: 192)

2.

"The fear is again that of the physical consciousness or of the vital element in it—it is afraid if it gives up desire that it will lose everything—or everything it wants —and gain nothing in exchange or at least nothing it wants. It does not realise that it will get something far greater and more powerful and happy in place of this troubled desire and its doubtful and precarious fruits—for it has been accustomed to think of desire as the only possible motive of life. It does not know that the divine Force is there waiting to descend with its light and peace and joy bringing much greater things and a happier life. When this part can be

enlightened and persuaded to want whole-heartedly the change, then a great difficulty, indeed the central difficulty will have gone." (CWSA 31: 263)

VI—Above the Head Is the Mother's Power

1.

"The Power above the head is of course the Mother's—it is the power of the Higher Consciousness which is preparing its way of descent. This Higher Consciousness carrying in it a sense of wide and boundless existence, light, power, peace, Ananda etc. is always there above the head and when something of the spiritual Force comes down to work upon the nature, it is from there that it comes. But nothing like the full descent of the peace, bliss etc. can come so long as the being is not ready." (CWSA 30: 458)

2.

"There is a higher consciousness above you, not in the body, so above the head, which we call the higher, spiritual or divine consciousness, or the Mother's consciousness." (CWSA 30: 385)

3.

"It [*the consciousness above the head*] is what we call the higher or spiritual consciousness—it contains or supports all the higher planes, the higher worlds. When one begins to feel this always above, it is a great step forward in the sadhana; then the consciousness can go up there and from there see, discern and control all that is in the mind, vital

and body. It is the meeting-place of the ascending and descending forces, as you see." (CWSA 30: 401)

4.

"When I speak of the Mother's force, I do not speak of the force of Prakriti which carries on things in the Ignorance but of the higher Force of the Divine that descends from above to transform the nature." (CWSA 32: 193)

5.

"Light, Peace, Force, Ananda constitute the spiritual consciousness; if they are not among the major experiences, what are?" (CWSA 30: 449)

6.

"What you feel streaming down must be the Mother's overhead Force. It flows usually from above the head and works at first in the mind centres (head and neck) and afterwards goes down into the chest and heart and then through the movement of the whole body.

It is the effect of this working which you must be feeling in the head up to the shoulders. The Force that comes down from above is the one that works to transform the consciousness into that of a higher spiritual being. Before that the Mother's Force works in the psychic, mental, vital and the physical plane itself to support, purify

and psychically change the consciousness." (CWSA 32: 203)

7.

"When you began to meditate, you saw the Mother's face; that is very good, it means that there is an inner connection established. The absence of the smile does not mean that she is displeased or that you have done anything against her will. At the same time the Mother's force descended on you, it was the pressure of her Force that you felt on the head and breast—everybody feels in the beginning this pressure—and what you felt in the breast was the working of the Force. In the Yoga these are signs of the action of the Yoga and you must observe quietly what happens without getting disturbed, remembering the Mother always and trusting in her action upon you." (CWSA 32: 203)

VII—Descent of the Higher Forces Is the Divine Mother's Own Descent

1.

"Q: *Is there any relation between the Mother's descent into the physical parts and the descent of the forces that are working in me?*

Certainly. In a sense, the descent of the higher forces is the Mother's own descent—for it is she who comes down in them." (CWSA 32: 204)

2.

"Q: *As I sat to pray, I felt an electric force pass through my spinal cord. It was like the electricity from a battery passing from the crown of my head down to the end of my backbone. The more it went downward, the more strong and joyous was the rapture I felt. What is this?*

A: It is the descent of the Mother's Force from above through the spinal cord—it is a well-known movement. There are two or three kinds of descent. One is this touching the base of the centres which rest on the spinal cord. Another is through the head into the body going from level to level till the whole body is filled and opening all the centres of consciousness. Another is a descent enveloping the Adhar from outside." (CWSA 32: 204)

3.

"Q: *Last night I felt that the Mother's Force, instead of descending through the head as usual, came down directly through the forehead centre.*

A: It can come in anywhere, but the normal way of descent is through the head." (CWSA 32: 204)

4.

"Something is growing in you, but it is all inside—still if there is the steady persistence it is bound to come out. For instance, this white dazzling light with currents, it is a sure sign of the Force (the Mother's) entering and working in the *ādhāra*, but it came to you in sleep—that is to say, in the inner being, still behind the veil. The moment it came out, the dryness would disappear." (CWSA 32: 207)

5.

"What the Mother did was to light the fire within—if you did not feel it, it must be because the outer covering has not yet allowed it to come through into the outer consciousness. But something in the inner being must have kept it and opened more widely—that is shown by your experience in sleep, for that was evidently an action of the Mother in the inner being. The descent of this current in the spine is always a descent of the Mother's Force working in the centres to open them; the strong force of the current

which you felt is an evident proof that the wider opening is there. You have only to persist and the effects both of the fire and the force will come out in the surface consciousness—for always there is a preparatory work behind the veil in the inner being before the veil thins or disappears and all the working can be done with the participation of the outer consciousness." (CWSA 32: 207)

6.

"The Mother's force can come down quite nicely and gently—there is no need of palpitations, giddiness or nausea for that." (CWSA 32: 207)

7.

"Q: *Nowadays in the evening I try to remain calm and pray for half an hour. Then I feel a weight or pressure on my head. It is so calm and cool, yet has such force and fire. Then I am disturbed by nothing whatever. Formerly I also felt this on certain days, but then I lost it due to some disorder of the consciousness.*

This weight or pressure on the head is always the sign that the Mother's Force is in contact with you and pressing from above to envelop your being and enter the Adhar and pervade it—usually passing by degrees through the centres on its way downward. Sometimes it comes first as Peace,

sometimes as Force, sometimes as the Mother's consciousness and her presence, sometimes as Ananda.

When you lost it before, it must have been due either to some uprising of vital imperfections in yourself or an attack from outside. Of course the pressure need not always be there, but if things take the ordinary course, it usually recurs or else continues until the Adhar is open and there is no further obstacle to the descent of the higher consciousness." (CWSA 32: 209)

VIII—The Inexhaustible Spiritual Energy Can Be Drawn at Will

1.

"Yogic science knows of other ways of acquiring [inexhaustible] energy [besides energy from food], and we shall mention two of the most important.

The first is to put oneself in relation with the energies accumulated in the terrestrial material world and to draw freely from this inexhaustible source. These material energies are obscure and half unconscious; they encourage animality in man, but, at the same time, they establish a kind of harmonious relationship between the human being and material Nature. .. The harmony created in them is not immune from all attack; it usually vanishes when circumstances become adverse. The child spontaneously receives this energy from material Nature as he expends all his energies without calculating, joyfully and freely. But in most human beings, as they grow up, this faculty is blunted by the worries of life, as a result of the predominant place which mental activities come to occupy in the consciousness.

However, there is a source of energy which, once discovered, is never exhausted, whatever the outer circumstances and physical conditions of life may be. It is the energy that can be described as spiritual, and is received no longer from below, from the inconscient

depths, but from above, from the supreme origin of the universe and man, from the all-powerful and eternal splendours of the superconscient. It is there, all around us, permeating everything; and to enter into contact with it and to receive it, it is enough to aspire sincerely for it, to open oneself to it in faith and trust, to widen one's consciousness and identify it with the universal Consciousness.

At the outset, this may seem very difficult, if not impossible. Yet by examining this phenomenon more closely, one can see that it is not so alien, not so remote from the normally developed human consciousness. Indeed, there are very few people who have not felt, at least once in their lives, as if lifted up beyond themselves, filled with an unexpected and uncommon force which, for a time, has made them capable of doing anything whatever; at such moments nothing seems too difficult and the word 'impossible' loses its meaning.

This experience, however fleeting it may be, gives a glimpse of the kind of contact with the higher energy that yogic discipline can secure and maintain.

The method of achieving this contact can hardly be given here. Besides, it is something individual and unique for each one, which starts from where he stands, adapting itself to his personal needs and helping him to take one more step forward. The path is sometimes long and slow, but the result is worth the trouble one takes. We can easily

imagine the consequences of this power to draw at will and in all circumstances on the boundless source of an energy that is all-powerful in its luminous purity. Weariness, exhaustion, illness, old age and even death become mere obstacles on the way, which a persistent will is sure to overcome." (CWM 12: 261–262)

2.

"To do properly the work of the Ashram one must be strong and plastic enough to know how to utilise the inexhaustible Energy which is backing you all.

I expect everybody here to rise to the height of the needs.

If we are not able to do even that much, how can we hope to be ready for the descent of the Light of Truth when it will come to manifest upon earth?..." (CWM 13: 159) (CWM 17: 395–396)

IX—Directing and Manipulating the Spiritual Force in Yoga

1.

"Moreover, it [spiritual Force] is not only in its results but in its movements that the Force is tangible and concrete. When I speak of feeling Force or Power, I do not mean simply having a vague sense of it, but feeling it concretely and consequently being able to direct it, manipulate it, watch its movement, be conscious of its mass and intensity and in the same way of that of other perhaps opposing forces; all these things are possible and usual by the development of Yoga." (CWSA 29: 181–182)

2.

"Concrete? what do you mean by 'concrete'? It [*spiritual force*] has its own concreteness; it can take a form (like a stream for instance) of which one is aware and can send it quite concretely in whatever 'direction' or on whatever object one chooses.

This is a statement of fact about the power inherent in spiritual consciousness. What I was speaking of was a willed use of any subtle force (it may be spiritual or mental or vital) to secure a particular result at some point in the world. Just as there are waves of unseen physical forces (cosmic waves etc.) or currents of electricity, so there are mind waves, thought currents, waves of emotion, e.g.

anger, sorrow, etc., which go out and affect others without their knowing whence they come or that they come at all—they only feel the result. One who has the occult or inner senses awake can feel them coming and invading him. Influences good or bad can propagate themselves in that way; that can happen without intention, automatically, but also a deliberate use can be made of them. There can also be a purposeful generation of force, spiritual or other. There can be too the use of the effective will or idea acting directly without the aid of any outward action, speech or other instrumentation which is not concrete in that sense, but is all the same effective." (CWSA 29: 183)

3.

"Leave aside the question of Divine or undivine, no spiritual man who acts dynamically is limited to physical contact—the idea that physical contact through writing, speech, meeting is indispensable to the action of the spiritual force is self-contradictory, for then it would not be a spiritual force. The spirit is not limited by physical things or by the body. If you have the spiritual force, it can act on people thousands of miles away who do not know and never will know that you are acting on them or that they are being acted upon—they only feel that there is a force enabling them to do things and may very well suppose it is their own great energy and genius." (CWSA 29: 184)

X—Concentrate Above the Head for Descent

1.

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

2.

"The first opening is effected by a concentration in the heart, a call to the Divine to manifest within us and through the psychic to take up and lead the whole nature. … The second opening is effected by a concentration of the consciousness in the head (afterwards, above it) and an aspiration and call and a sustained will for the descent of the divine Peace, Power, Light, Knowledge, Ananda into the being—the Peace first or the Peace and Force together. Some indeed receive Light first or Ananda first or some sudden pouring down of knowledge. With some there is first an opening which reveals to them a vast infinite Silence, Force, Light or Bliss above them and afterwards either they ascend to that or these things begin to descend into the lower nature. With others there is either the

descent, first into the head, then down to the heart level, then to the navel and below and through the whole body, or else an inexplicable opening—without any sense of descent—of peace, light, wideness or power or else a horizontal opening into the cosmic consciousness or, in a suddenly widened mind, an outburst of knowledge. Whatever comes has to be welcomed—for there is no absolute rule for all,—but if the peace has not come first, care must be taken not to swell oneself in exultation or lose the balance. The capital movement however is when the Divine Force or Shakti, the power of the Mother comes down and takes hold, for then the organisation of the consciousness begins and the larger foundation of the Yoga." (CWSA 30: 327–328) (CWSA 32: 205–206)

3.

"The object of the concentration in the head is to rise to the Divine Consciousness and bring down the Light of the Mother or her Force or Ananda into all the centres. This movement of ascent and descent is implied in the process of your japa and it is not therefore necessary to renounce it." (CWSA 29: 325)

4.

"As a rule the only mantra used in this sadhana is that of the Mother or of my name and the Mother. The concentration in the heart and the concentration in the

head can both be used—each has its own result. The first opens up the psychic being and brings bhakti, love and union with the Mother, her presence within the heart and the action of her Force in the nature. The other opens the mind to self-realisation, to the consciousness of what is above mind, to the ascent of the consciousness out of the body and the descent of the higher consciousness into the body." (CWSA 29: 326)

5.

"That other way is the concentration in the head, in the mental centre. This, if it brings about the silence of the surface mind, opens up an inner, larger, deeper mind within which is more capable of receiving spiritual experience and spiritual knowledge. But once concentrated here one must open the silent mental consciousness upward to all that is above mind. After a time one feels the consciousness rising upward and in the end it rises beyond the lid which has so long kept it tied in the body and finds a centre above the head where it is liberated into the Infinite. There it begins to come into contact with the universal Self, the Divine Peace, Light, Power, Knowledge, Bliss, to enter into that and become that, to feel the descent of these things into the nature. To concentrate in the head with the aspiration for quietude in the mind and the realisation of the Self and Divine above is the second way of concentration. It is important, however, to

remember that the concentration of the consciousness in the head is only a preparation for its rising to the centre above; otherwise one may get shut up in one's own mind and its experiences or at best attain only to a reflection of the Truth above instead of rising into the spiritual transcendence to live there. For some the mental concentration is easier, for some the concentration in the heart centre; some are capable of doing both alternately—but to begin with the heart centre, if one can do it, is the more desirable." (CWSA 29:7)

6.

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

7.

"What you feel in the head is probably the first conscious descent into the body of the divine Force from above. Up to now it must have been working unfelt by you from

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

8.

"The result of the concentration is not usually immediate—though to some there comes a swift and sudden outflowering; but with most there is a time longer or shorter of adaptation or preparation, especially if the nature has not been prepared already to some extent by aspiration and tapasya." (CWSA 30: 328)

XI—How to Open So That the Descent Can Take Place

1.

"There is a state in which the sadhak is conscious of the Divine Force working in him or of its results at least and does not obstruct its descent or its action by his own mental activities, vital restlessness or physical obscurity and inertia. That is openness to the Divine. Surrender is the best way of opening; but aspiration and quietness can do it up to a certain point so long as there is not the surrender." (CWSA 29: 105–106)

2.

"*Q: What does opening' mean? Is it: 'not to keep anything secret from the Mother'?*

A: That is the first step towards opening." (CWSA 32: 150–151)

3.

"*Q: How does one 'open'?*

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

4.

"It is by confidence in the Mother that the opening needed will come when your consciousness is ready. … it is not by

meditation alone that what is needed will come. It is by faith and openness to the Mother."
(CWSA 29: 109)

5.

"The principal thing in the Yoga is to trust in the Divine Grace at every step, to direct the thought continually to the Divine and to offer oneself till the being opens and the Mother's force can be felt working in the Adhara." (CWSA 32: 166)

6.

"It is by the constant remembrance that the being is prepared for the full opening. By the opening of the heart the Mother's presence begins to be felt and by the opening to her Power above the Force of the higher consciousness comes down into the body and works there to change the whole nature." (CWSA 32: 167)

7.

"*Q: Is our inner being already open to the Mother or does it open in the course of sadhana?*

A: The inner being does not open except by sadhana, or by some psychic touch on the life." (CWSA 32: 162)

8.

"Yes, it is by quieting the mind that you will become able to call the Mother and open to her. The soothing effect was a touch from the psychic—one of the touches that prepare the opening of the psychic with its gift of inner peace, love and joy." (CWSA 32: 163)

9.

"No, it is not enough to be in the Asram—one has to open to the Mother and put away the mud which one was playing with in the world." (CWSA 32: 156)

10.

"But why be overwhelmed by any wealth of any kind of experiences? What does it amount to after all? The quality of a sadhak does not depend on that; one great spiritual realisation direct and at the centre will often make a great sadhak or Yogi, an army of intermediate Yogic experiences will not, that has been amply proved by a host of instances. You need not therefore compare that wealth to your poverty. To open yourself to the descent of the higher consciousness (the true being) is the one thing needed and that, even if that comes after long effort and many failures, is better than a hectic gallop leading nowhere." (CWSA 30: 37)

11.

"That you should be able to keep your consciousness uplifted is already something. As for the opening its coming and apparent closing is a normal experience—it needs several openings before the thing is settled by a permanent poise of the consciousness above and an increasing descent into the head and below. It is the pull from below that should get no indulgence—for that, though most do indulge in it, is a wrong crabby way of doing it. One must be safely stationed above before one can descend without a tumble. Not that the tumble if it comes precludes a going up again—it does not; but that is no reason for letting it happen." (CWSA 30: 424)

12.

"Even if the permanent opening does not come at once, you have only to wait and it is bound to come. It is certainly a pity that the restlessness of the vital should kick so much against vacancy of the consciousness; for if you could stand it this emptiness, now neutral, and therefore not interesting to the vital, would become positive and be the peaceful recipient of the pouring from above. The difficulty is that the vital has always been accustomed either to doing something or to something doing and when it is doing nothing or nothing is doing (or it seems like that on the surface), it gets bored and begins to feel and talk or to do nonsense. However even with this obstacle, the Descent

can come down—it need not wait for the Supramental." (CWSA 30: 424)

13.

"All these are different actions of the Force on the adhar with the one intention of opening it up from above and below and horizontally also. The action from above opens it to the descent of forces from above the Mind and the ascent of consciousness above the lid of the ordinary human mind. The horizontal action opens it to the cosmic consciousness on all its levels. The action from below helps to connect the superconscient with the subconscient. Finally the consciousness instead of being limited in the body becomes infinite, rises infinitely above, plunges infinitely below, widens infinitely on every side. There is besides the opening of all the centres to the Light and Power and Ananda that has to descend from above. At present only the mind centres seem to receive fully the descent of Force, while the upper vital centres are being prepared with a minor action on other parts of the body. It is a matter of time and perseverance for the way to be entirely open." (CWSA 30: 425)

14.

"There is however no invariable rule as to the order of the opening. By concentration on the heart centre that can open first liberating the psychic action, which is veiled by

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

15.

"These questionings and depressions are very foolish movements of the mind. If you were not open to the Grace, you would not have had these descents or experiences and there would have been no such progress as you have made. You have not to put such questions but to take it as a settled fact, and with full faith in the Mother and her working in you go on with your sadhana. Whatever difficulties there may be, will be solved in time by the natural progress of the sadhana." (CWSA 31: 736)

16.

"In this Yoga there is no fixed mantra, no stress is laid on mantras, although sadhaks can use one if they find it helpful or so long as they find it helpful. The stress is rather on an aspiration in the consciousness and a concentration

of the mind, heart, will, all the being. If a mantra is found helpful for that, one uses it. OM if rightly used (not mechanically) might very well help the opening upwards and outwards (cosmic consciousness) as well as the descent.” (CWSA 29: 324)

XII—First, Only Part of the Being Opens

1.

"Openness is not always complete from the first—a part of the being opens, other parts of the consciousness remain still closed or half open only—one has to aspire till all is open. Even with the best and most powerful sadhak the full opening takes time; nor is there anyone who has been able to abandon everything at once without any struggle. There is no reason to feel therefore that if you call you will not be heard—the Mother knows the difficulties of human nature and will help you through. Persevere always, call always and then after each difficulty there will be a progress." (CWSA 32: 156–157)

2.

"The opening of the vital mind (or any part) does not mean that the vital mind is absolutely open or wholly converted so that there shall never again be any darkness or ignorance or error or resistance or anything else but the higher consciousness there. It only means that the higher consciousness is able to come down there and work and establish something of itself there—as has been done in the thinking mind. Each plane, one after the other, has to open initially in that way down to the physical. So long as this initial opening is not made in all the parts, there can be no complete and final descent of the higher

consciousness anywhere. If the nervous being and other physical parts are not open, even the thinking mind cannot be finally open, for it can be affected by resistance, darkness etc. from below. If the vital mind is open, that does not mean that it is open so wholly that it is already divine and is not feeling pride or other wrong movements.

As for the nervous being, it is part of the physical consciousness, below the physical mind and not above it—the nerves are part of the body." (CWSA 30: 491–492)

XIII—The Conditions for Descent Are Surrender and Self-opening

1.

"But the supreme Grace will act only in the conditions of the Light and the Truth; it will not act in conditions laid upon it by the Falsehood and the Ignorance. For if it were to yield to the demands of the Falsehood, it would defeat its own purpose.

These are the conditions of the Light and Truth, the sole conditions under which the highest Force will descend; and it is only the very highest supramental Force descending from above and opening from below that can victoriously handle the physical Nature and annihilate its difficulties . . . There must be a total and sincere surrender; there must be an exclusive self-opening to the divine Power; there must be a constant and integral choice of the Truth that is descending, a constant and integral rejection of the falsehood of the mental, vital and physical Powers and Appearances that still rule the earth-Nature.

The surrender must be total and seize all the parts of the being. …

If part of the being surrenders, but another part reserves itself, follows its own way or makes its own conditions, then each time that that happens, you are yourself pushing the divine Grace away from you.

If behind your devotion and surrender you make a cover for your desires, egoistic demands and vital insistences, if you put these things in place of the true aspiration or mix them with it and try to impose them on the Divine Shakti, then it is idle to invoke the divine Grace to transform you.

If you open yourself on one side or in one part to the Truth and on another side are constantly opening the gates to hostile forces, it is vain to expect that the divine Grace will abide with you. You must keep the temple clean if you wish to instal there the living Presence." (CWSA 32: 3–4)

2.

"It is not by 'thinking out' the entire reality, but by a change of consciousness that one can pass from the ignorance to the Knowledge—the Knowledge by which we become what we know. To pass from the external to a direct and intimate inner consciousness; to widen consciousness out of the limits of the ego and the body; to heighten it by an inner will and aspiration and opening to the Light till it passes in its ascent beyond Mind; to bring down a descent of the supramental Divine through self-giving and surrender with a consequent transformation of mind, life and body—this is the *integral* way to the Truth. It is this that we call the Truth here and aim at in our Yoga." (CWSA 28: 355)

3.

"For here, there are two movements with a transitional stage between them, two periods of this Yoga,—one of the process of surrender, the other of its crown and consequence. In the first the individual prepares himself for the reception of the Divine into his members. For all this first period he has to work by means of the instruments of the lower Nature, but aided more and more from above. But in the later transitional stage of this movement our personal and necessarily ignorant effort more and more dwindles and a higher Nature acts; the eternal Shakti descends into this limited form of mortality and progressively possesses and transmutes it. In the second period the greater movement wholly replaces the lesser, formerly indispensable first action; but this can be done only when our self-surrender is complete." (CWSA 23: 86)

4.

"All our thoughts, impulses, feelings, actions have to be referred to him for his sanction or disallowance, or if we cannot yet reach this point, to be offered to him in our sacrifice of aspiration, so that he may more and more descend into us and be present in them all and pervade them with all his will and power, his light and knowledge, his love and delight. In the end all our thoughts, feelings, impulses, actions will begin to proceed from him and change into some divine seed and form of themselves; in

our whole inner living we shall have grown conscious of ourselves as a part of his being till between the existence of the Divine whom we adore and our own lives there is no longer any division." (CWSA 24: 602)

XIV—Divine Peace—Given and Lost Because Something Refuses to Surrender

1.

"The fact is that here in the lower Nature the Divine is veiled by a cosmic Ignorance and what takes place does not proceed directly from the divine knowledge. That everything is equally the will of God is a very convenient suggestion of the hostile influences which would have the creation stick as tightly as possible to the disorder and ugliness to which it has been reduced. So what is to be done, you ask? Well, call down the Light, open yourselves to the power of Transformation. Innumerable times the divine peace has been given to you and as often you have lost it—because something in you refuses to surrender its petty egoistic routine. If you are not always vigilant, your nature will return to its old unregenerate habits even after it has been filled with the descending Truth. It is the struggle between the old and the new that forms the crux of the Yoga; but if you are bent on being faithful to the supreme Law and Order revealed to you, the parts of your being belonging to the domain of chance will, however slowly, be converted and divinised." (CWM 3: 163–164)

XV—Other Conditions for the Descent

1. When the mind falls silent

1a.
"It is not an undesirable thing for the mind to fall silent, to be free from thoughts and still—for it is oftenest when the mind falls silent that there is the full descent of a wide peace from above and in that wide tranquillity the realisation of the silent Self above the mind spread out in its vastnesses everywhere. Only, when there is the peace and the mental silence, the vital mind tries to rush in and occupy the place or else the mechanical mind tries to raise up for the same purpose its round of trivial habitual thoughts. What the sadhaka has to do is to be careful to reject and hush these outsiders, so that during the meditation at least the peace and quietude of the mind and vital may be complete. This can be done best if you keep a strong and silent will. That will is the will of the Purusha behind the mind; when the mind is at peace, when it is silent one can become aware of the Purusha, silent also, separate from the action of the nature." (CWSA 29: 160)

1b.
"It is wise to receive the descending Force in silence and concentration, but this silence and concentration should

not come from the vital's resentment at not being allowed to follow its whims.

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

1c.
"It [the mind] has first to be made quiet and open to the higher consciousness and transformed by the descent of the higher consciousness." (CWSA 29: 142)

2. The higher descends when you have a receptive quietude

2a.
"The Higher descends when you have a receptive quietude in the various planes of your being prepared to receive it. In either case whether in aspiring upward to rise to the Higher or in remaining passive and open to receive the Higher, an entire calmness in the different parts of the being is the true condition. If you do not have the necessary force in the quiet aspiration or will and if you find that a certain amount of effort will help you in rising upward, you may go on using it as a temporary means until there is the natural openness in which a silent call or simple

effortless will is sufficient to induce the action of the Higher Shakti." (CWSA 36: 301)

2b.

"Some have this swaying of the body when the peace or the Force begins to descend upon it, as it facilitates for it the reception. The swaying ceases usually when the body is accustomed to assimilate the descent.

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

2c.

"That is always the best thing to do. To keep quiet, open and call or wait for the descent." (CWM 14: 136)

2d.

"What usually comes is a descent of the Divine Power to work upon the nature and prepare it for the Divine Presence in the heart. There is much in human nature that has to be changed before it can hold what descends—incapacity and limitation of the mind, insufficient purity in the heart and elsewhere, restlessness etc. To contain the descent a quiet mind and pure heart are needed. That is why there is the restlessness and sense of incapacity in her. That is a quite common experience. If she wants to go farther, she must aspire for calm, peace, purity, etc. in the mental and emotional being and allow what is descending to establish it in her." (CWSA 30: 487–488)

3. With the quiet mind, first call down the descent of the purity and peace, and call it again and again

3a.

"By so standing back it will be easier also for you to find a quiet poise in yourself, behind the surface struggle, from which you can more effectively call in our help to deliver you. The Divine presence, calm, peace, purity, force, light, joy, wideness are above, waiting to descend in you. Find this quietude behind and your mind also will become quieter and through the quiet mind you can call down the descent first of the purity and peace and then of the Divine

Force. If you can feel this peace and purity descending into you, you can then call it down again and again till it begins to settle; you will feel too the Force working in you to change the movements and transform the consciousness. In this working you will be aware of the presence and power of the Mother. Once that is done, all the rest will be a question of time and of the progressive evolution in you of your true and divine nature." (CWSA 31: 741)

3b.

"The sense of peace, purity and calm felt by you is brought about by a union or strong contact of the lower with the higher consciousness; it cannot be permanent at first, but it can become so by an increased frequency and durability of the calm and peace and finally by the full descent of the eternal peace and calm and silence of the higher consciousness into the lower nature." (CWSA 28: 66)

3c.

"Why should it [*a sense of purity in the being*] be an imagination? When the higher consciousness touches it creates so long as it is there an essential purity in which all parts of the being can share. Or, even if the exterior being does not share actively in it, it may fall quiescent so that there is nothing to interfere with the whole inner being realising the truth of a certain experience. The state does not last because it is only a preparatory touch, not the full

or permanent descent; but while it is there it is real. The sex-sensation is of course the thing in the external being, the perversion or false representation in nature, that is the chief obstacle to the experience becoming frequent and then normal. It usually happens that such an opposite tries to assert itself after an experience." (CWSA 30: 443)

3d.

"What stands in the way is the recurring circle of the old mixture. To break out of that is very necessary to arrive at an inner Yogic calm and peace not disturbed by these things. If that is established, it will be possible to feel in it the Mother's Presence, to open to her guidance, to get, not by occasional glimpses but in a steady opening and flowering, the psychic perception and the descent of the spiritual Light and Ananda. For that help will be with you." (CWSA 32: 174)

3e.

"*Someone told me that only ten days were left for the August 15th Darshan. I replied that every day should be considered as the 15th.*

That is the right attitude. Every day should be regarded as a day when a descent may take place or a contact established with the higher consciousness. Then the 15th

itself would be more successful." 4 August 1934 (CWSA 35: 523)

4. Be passive only to the divine force and not open to everything

4a.

"The reason why the force flows out of him must be because he allows himself to become too inertly passive and open to everything. One must be passive only to the Divine Force, but vigilant not to put oneself at the mercy of all forces. If he becomes passive when he tries to see God in another person, he is likely to put himself at the disposal of any force that is working through that person and his own forces may be drained away towards the other. It is better for him not to try in this way; let him aspire for the Peace and Strength that come from above and for entire purity and open himself to that Force only. Such experiences as the feeling of the Divine everywhere (not in this or that person only) will then come of themselves." (CWSA 30: 492–493)

5. The higher forces need a great stillness in the being to bear

5a.

"It is not a matter of any particular act or feeling, but a sort of excited vibration with which the vital and physical

consciousness meets the vital disturbance—it is evident in the tone and language of what you write when there is the stress of vital suggestion—but it used also to rise when you got the experiences in an excited vibration and bubbling of joy which would easily lapse into some rajasic movement or be replaced by the opposite excitement of suffering and disturbance. Quiet, quiet and more quiet, calm strength, calm gladness are what are needed in mind and nerves and body as a basis for the siddhi—precisely because the Force, the Light, the Ananda that come down are extremely intense and need a great stillness in the being to bear and support them." (CWSA 30: 450)

6. Parts must widen before the higher consciousness can descend

6a.

"*Q: When there is obscurity or habitual thoughts, the narrowness of the physical mind becomes prominent. But now and then, the physical mind seems to become limitless, thoughtless and without obscurity. Is this a true feeling?*

A: Yes. All the parts that have to be changed must widen like that before the higher consciousness can descend into them." (CWSA 32: 203–204)

6b.

"Wideness is only the first step—there must be the descent of light, knowledge, peace, force or power and the settling of these things and their constant development." (CWSA 30: 449)

6c.

"The Power does not descend with the object of raising up the lower forces, but in the way it has to work at present, that uprising comes in as a reaction to the working. What is needed is the establishment of the calm and wide consciousness at the base of the whole Nature so that when the lower nature appears, it will not be as an attack or struggle but as if a Master of forces were there seeing the defects of the present machinery and doing step by step what is necessary to remedy and change it." (CWSA 31: 636)

6d.

"Of course the full effects of the spiritual experiences can only come when the whole consciousness is entirely open and receives and responds to them. The presence of the Mother in all can be felt when one begins to have the widening of the consciousness in which it is not shut up in the personal self and the body but is extended everywhere. That comes usually with the descent of the higher consciousness from above. But one can also feel a beginning of it through the opening of the psychic. Then

of course anger and jealousy do not remain—they fall away from the sense of spiritual oneness." (CWSA 32: 288)

6e.

"The first pressure was on your mind. The centres of the mind are (a) the head and above it, (b) the centre of the forehead between the eyes, (c) the throat and the vital mental (emotional) and sensational mind centres from the breast downward. It is this latter which is the first *prāṇa* of which you became aware. The action of the Power was to widen these two parts of you and raise them up towards the lowest centre of the higher consciousness above your head, so that hereafter they might both be consciously governed from there and that these might both move in a wide universal consciousness not limited by the body." (CWSA 32: 208)

6f.

"The force which you felt must evidently have been a rising of the Kundalini ascending to join the Force above and bring down the energy needed to ease the depression and then again rising to enforce the connection between the Above and the lower centres. The seeming expansion of the head is due to the joining of the mind with the consciousness of the Self or Divine above. That consciousness is wide and illimitable and when one rises into it the individual consciousness also breaks its limits

and feels wide and illimitable. At such times one often feels as if there were no head and no body but all were a wide self and its consciousness, or else the head or the body is only a circumstance in that. The body or the physical mind is sometimes startled or alarmed at these experiences because they are abnormal to it; but there is no ground for alarm,—these are usual experiences in the Yoga." (CWSA 30: 421)

6g.

"She has also a day or two ago had the experience of the ascent above and of the wideness of peace and joy of the Infinite (free from the bodily sense and limitation) as also the descent down to the Muladhara. She does not know the names or technicalities of these things but her description which was minute and full of details was unmistakable. There are three or four others who have had this experience recently so that we may suppose the working of the Force is not altogether in vain, as this experience is a very big affair and is supposed to be, if stabilised, the summit of the old Yogas. For us it is only a beginning of spiritual transformation. I have said this though it is personal so that you may understand that outside defects and obstacles in the nature or the appearance of unyogicness does not necessarily mean that a person can do or is doing no sadhana." (CWSA 30: 23–24)

6h.

"Probably the accumulated Force became more than the physical being could receive. When that happens, the right thing to do is to widen oneself (one can learn to do it by a little practice). If the consciousness is in a state of wideness, then it can receive any amount of Force without inconvenience." (CWSA 30: 495)

6i.

"If the pressure is too great, the remedy is to widen the consciousness. With the peace and silence there should come a wideness that can receive any amount of Force without any reactions, whether heaviness or compulsion to remain withdrawn or the difficulty of the eyes etc." (CWSA 30: 473)

6j.

"It is of course the inner wideness in which you were absorbed so that outward things went on of themselves without engaging the interest. In the meditation it was the same descent into the head—when it fills the head, there is often this feeling of there being no head, only that which is coming down or else a wideness in which that is acting. In the end one gets the feeling of being not something confined in the head and body, but wide consciousness with the body only as something comparatively small inside it. The vision was a figure of this wider consciousness with

the Mother's inner presence always there." (CWSA 30: 276–277)

6k.
"The wideness is that of the higher consciousness, golden being the colour of the light of Truth, and the Cow is the symbol of the Light of the higher consciousness descending, turning all into the Truth light.

The state of wideness and of quietude unaffected by anything that happens is the natural result of the descent which you saw in this figure. The impartial condition towards work or not work is also a result of this descent. Usually it is the vital that pushes to work and without this vital push one can do very little. When the higher consciousness descends into the mind and vital, this push becomes silent, but the faculty of work remains,—afterwards when the new consciousness is settled it takes up the work and carries it on with another force which replaces the push of the vital and is much greater." (CWSA 30: 490)

7. Do not see only the personal weakness; remain calm and detached, calling the Mother's force for transformation

7a.
"Of course consciousness grows as the opening increases and one result of consciousness is to be able to see in

oneself—but not to see the weaknesses only, to see the whole play of forces. Only in the right consciousness one does not regard the weaknesses even in a too personal way so as to get discouraged. One has to see them as the play of nature, mental nature, vital nature, physical nature, common to all human beings—to see them so and remain calm and detached, calling in the Mother's force and light for transformation of this defective play into the true nature—not getting impatient if it is not done at once, but going on steadily and giving time for the change. The full change indeed cannot come till all is ready for the descent of a greater, calmer, larger consciousness from above and that is only possible when the ordinary consciousness has been made thoroughly ready for it." (CWSA 31: 702)

8. By persistent will and practice, blocks due to an unhabituated lower nature can be overcome

8a.

"To both of these movements [of ascent and descent] there can be a block—a block above due to the mind and lower nature being unhabituated (*it is that really and not incapacity*) and a block below due to the physical consciousness and its natural slowness to change. Everybody has these blocks but by persistent will,

aspiration or *abhyāsa* they can be overcome." (CWSA 30: 419)

8b.

"The illumination above the head as usually seen in this Yoga is the Light of the Divine Truth. It is above the head that there is perpetually the Divine Peace, Force, Light, Knowledge, Ananda. These begin to descend into the body when the personal consciousness is prepared sufficiently. The preparation is usually full of vicissitudes such as these [*illness, sleeplessness, an inability to concentrate*] but one has to persist patiently, opening oneself more and more till that is ready." (CWSA 30: 442)

9. The constant presence of the Mother through practice can prepare the descent of grace

9a.

"The constant presence of the Mother comes by practice; the Divine Grace is essential for success in the sadhana, but it is the practice that prepares the descent of the Grace.

You have to learn to go inward, ceasing to live in external things only, quiet the mind and aspire to become aware of the Mother's workings in you." (CWSA 32: 172)

10. When one feels the Mother's force doing the work, then adhar becomes open to the descent from above

10a.

"This [*experience of the true attitude*] happens when the work is always associated with the Mother's thought, done as an offering to her, with the call to do it through you. All ideas of ego, all association of egoistic feelings with the work must disappear. One begins to feel the Mother's force doing the work; the psychic grows through a certain inner attitude behind the work and the adhar becomes open both to the psychic intuitions and influences from within and to the descent from above. Then the result of meditation can come through the work itself." (CWSA 32: 253)

10b.

"The experiences you have are a good starting-point for realisation. They have to develop into the light of a deeper state in which there will be the descent of a higher Consciousness into you. Your present consciousness in which you feel these things is only a preparatory one—in which the Mother works in you through the cosmic power according to your state of consciousness and your karma and in that working both success and failure can come—one has to remain equal-minded to both while trying always for success. A surer guidance can come even in this

preparatory consciousness if you are entirely turned towards her alone in such a way that you can feel her direct guidance and follow it without any other influence or force intervening to act upon you, but that condition is not easy to get or keep—it needs a great one-pointedness and constant single-minded dedication. When the higher consciousness will descend, then a closer union, a more intimate consciousness of the Presence and a more illumined intuition will become possible." (CWSA 30: 443–444)

11. The attitude of the witness consciousness within helps the descent of the higher consciousness

11a.

"The attitude of the witness consciousness within—I do not think it necessarily involves an external seclusion, though one may do that also—is a very necessary stage in the progress. It helps the liberation from the lower prakriti—not getting involved in the ordinary nature movements; it helps the establishment of a perfect calm and peace within, for there is then one part of the being which remains detached and sees being disturbed the perturbations of the surface; it helps also the ascent into the higher consciousness and the descent of the higher consciousness, for it is through this calm, detached and

liberated inner being that the ascent and descent can easily be done. Also, to have the same witness look on the movements of Prakriti in others, seeing, understanding but not perturbed by them in any way is a very great help towards both the liberation and the universalisation of the being. I could not therefore possibly object to this movement in a sadhak." (CWSA 30: 244–245)

12. When the psychic is awakened, you can open to the descending truth and be shaped by it

12a.

"This desire to find fault, this malicious passion to criticise and doubt what something in oneself tells one is a higher reality is the very stamp of humanity—it marks out the merely human. Wherever, on the other hand, there is a spontaneous admiration for the true, the beautiful, the noble, there is something divine expressed. You should know for certain that it is the psychic being, the soul in you with which your physical consciousness comes in contact when your heart leaps out to worship and admire what you feel to be of a divine origin.

The moment you are in front of what you feel to be such, you should be moved to tears of joy. … Why should you bother about your ego when the main concern is that the Divine should reveal itself wherever it wants and in

whatever manner it chooses? You should feel fulfilled when it is thus expressed, you should be able to burst the narrow bonds of your miserable personality, and soar up in unselfish joy. This joy is the true sign that your soul has awakened and has sensed the truth. It is only then that you can open to the influence of the descending truth and be shaped by it. I remember occasions when I used to be moved to tears on seeing even children, even babies do something that was most divinely beautiful and simple. Feel that joy and you will be able to profit by the Divine's presence in your midst." (CWM 3: 158–159)

12b.

"Very usually the first preparation is to work on the mind and vital and physical nature in such a way that the soul, the psychic being can have a chance of manifesting itself and influencing the rest of the nature; for that purpose all the main darknesses in the mind and vital have to be combated and thrown out and the physical also prepared in an initial way so that the descent may be possible. This is what has been done so long in you. It has to be made stronger and more complete; but sufficient has been done for it to be possible to prepare the descent of the higher consciousness." (CWSA 30: 458)

XVI—Pray or Call for the Higher Consciousness

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." (CWSA 30: 470)

2.

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

3.

"What comes from above can come when one is in a clear mind or when the vital is disturbed, when one is meditating or when one is moving about, when one is working or when one is doing nothing. Most often it comes when one is in a clear concentrated state, but it may not,—there is no absolute rule. Moreover the pull or call may produce no immediate effect and yet there may be an effect when one is no longer actually pulling or calling. All these mental reasons alleged for its coming or going are too rigid—sometimes they apply, very often they don't apply. One has to have faith, confidence, aspiration but one cannot bind down the Force as to when, how and why it will act." (CWSA 30: 442)

4.

"It [*the higher consciousness*] descends in the atmosphere, but for it to be effective the individual must receive and respond. It descends also in the individual independently of the atmosphere." (CWSA 30: 442)

5.

Calling the Mother's Force

"I tried to meditate, but I simply had to give it up as the mind would not cooperate.

When you cannot meditate, remain quiet and call in the Mother's Peace or Force." (CWSA 32: 215)

6.

"These minutes of contact with the soul are often those that mark a decisive turn of our life, a forward step, a progress in consciousness, and that frequently corresponds with a crisis, an extremely intense situation when there comes a call in the whole being, a call so strong that the inner consciousness pierces the layers of unconsciousness covering it and is revealed all luminous on the surface. This call of the being, when very strong, can also bring about the descent of a divine emanation, an individuality, a divine aspect which joins with your individuality at a given moment in order to do a given work, win a battle, express

one thing or another. The work done, the emanation very often withdraws." (CWM 15: 341)

7.

"The supramental Yoga is at once an ascent towards God and a descent of Godhead into the embodied nature.

The ascent can only be achieved by a one-centred all gathering upward aspiration of the soul and mind and life and body; the descent can only come by a call of the whole being towards the infinite and eternal Divine. If this call and this aspiration are there, or if by any means they can be born and grow constantly and seize all the nature, then and then only a supramental uplifting and transformation becomes possible." (CWSA 12: 169)

XVII—Aspire for the Descent

1.

"Aspiration is a turning upward of the inner being with a call, yearning, prayer for the Divine, for the Truth, for the Consciousness, Peace, Ananda, Knowledge, descent of Divine Force or whatever else is the aim of one's endeavour." (CWSA 29: 56–57)

2.

"Q: Do calm and equality come down from above by the Mother's Grace?

A: When they descend, it is by the soul's aspiration and the Mother's grace." (CWSA 32: 165)

3.

"The Mother's Peace is above you—by aspiration and quiet self-opening it descends. When it takes hold of the vital and the body, then equanimity becomes easy and in the end automatic." (CWSA 32: 135–136)

4.

"Or you can concentrate to call down from above you (where it always is) first her calm and peace, then her power and light and her ananda. It is always there above the head—but superconscient to the human mind—by

aspiration and concentration it can become conscient to it and the adhar can open to it so that it descends and enters into mind, life and body." (CWSA 32: 155)

5.

"It [*peace*] has to be brought down to the heart and navel first. That gives it a certain kind of inner stability—though not absolute. There is no method other than aspiration, a strong quiet will and a rejection of all that is not turned towards the Divine in those parts into which you call the peace—here the emotional and higher vital." (CWSA 30: 452)

6.

"And then, above all, above all, it is that inner flame, that aspiration, that need for the light. It is a kind of—how to put it?—luminous enthusiasm that seizes you. It is an irresistible need to melt away, to give oneself, to exist only in the Divine.

At that moment you have the experience of your aspiration.

But that moment should be absolutely sincere and as integral as possible; and all this must occur not only in the head, not only here, but must take place everywhere, in all the cells of the body. The consciousness integrally must have this irresistible need.... The thing lasts for some time, then diminishes, gets extinguished. You cannot keep these

things for very long. But then it so happens that a moment later or the next day or some time later, suddenly you have the opposite experience. Instead of feeling this ascent, and all that, this is no longer there and you have the feeling of the Descent, the Answer. And nothing but the Answer exists. Nothing but the divine thought, the divine will, the divine energy, the divine action exists any longer. And you too, you are no longer there.

That is to say, it is the answer to our aspiration. It may happen immediately afterwards—that is very rare but may happen. If you have both simultaneously, then the state is perfect; usually they alternate; they alternate more and more closely until the moment there is a total fusion. Then there is no more distinction. I heard a Sufi mystic, who was besides a great musician, an Indian, saying that for the Sufis there was a state higher than that of adoration and surrender to the Divine, than that of devotion, that this was not the last stage; the last stage of the progress is when there is no longer any distinction; you have no longer this kind of adoration or surrender or consecration; it is a very simple state in which one makes no distinction between the Divine and oneself. They know this. It is even written in their books. It is a commonly known condition in which everything becomes quite simple. There is no longer any difference. There is no longer that kind of ecstatic surrender to 'Something' which is beyond you in every way, which you do not understand, which is merely the result of

your aspiration, your devotion. There is no difference any longer. When the union is perfect, there is no longer any difference.” (CWM 5: 56–57)

XVIII—Why Purification Is Needed for Descent

1.

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

2.

"You can write to him in Bengali and tell him that Sri Aurobindo has seen the letters and says that the vision is interesting as showing that his inner being which came up in the dream is capable of receiving the Light which descends from above through the head into the other centres of the being. It is too early to say more. But he can continue with his aspiration and endeavour and report what experiences he has.

You can also tell him that there are two stages in the Yoga, one of preparation and one of the actual intensive sadhana. It is the first that he can undertake. In this stage aspiration in the heart with prayer, bhakti, meditation, a will to offer the life to the Divine are the important things. Purification of the nature is the first aim to be achieved. There should be no over-eagerness for experiences but such as come should be observed and, if helpful to the right attitude and true development, accepted. All that flatters the ego or feeds it should be rejected. There should be no impatience if the progress is slow or difficulties many — all should be done in a calm patience — and full reliance on the Divine Mother. This period tests the capacity of the sadhak and the sincerity of his aspiration towards the Divine." (CWSA 35: 551)

3.

"The attitude which he describes, if he keeps it correctly, is the right one. It brought him at first the beginning of a

true experience, the Light (white and golden) and the Force pouring down from the Sahasradala and filling the system; but when it touched the vital parts it must have awakened the prana energies in the vital centres (navel and below) and as these were not pure, all the impurities arose (anger, sex, fear, doubt etc.) and the mind became clouded by the uprush of impure vital forces. He says that all this is now subsiding, the mind is becoming calm and in the vital the impulses come but do not remain. Not only the mind but the vital must become calm; these impulses must lose their force of recurrence by rejection and purification. Entire purity and peace must be established in the whole *ādhāra*; it is only then that he will have a safe and sure basis for further progress." (CWSA 30: 492)

4.

"As for the experience itself it takes up the movement which had started in you a long time ago and was interrupted by the vital upheaval that brought you so much trouble and struggle. Only, there has been since a widening of the consciousness and a step forward which made this form of the experience possible. At that time you had not much appreciation for calm and peace—you hankered only after bhakti and Ananda. But calm, peace, shanti are the necessary basis for any establishment of other things. Otherwise there is no solid foundation in the consciousness; if there is only unrest and movement,

bhakti, Ananda and everything else can only come and go in starts and fits and find no ground to live on. It must, however, be not a mere mental quiet, but the deep spiritual peace of the shantimaya Shiva. It was this that touched you (descending through the head) in this experience. For the rest it is a resumption of the piercing of the veil, the beginning of the power of inner experience as opposed to the lesser experiences of the surface, the opening of the inner being, which is necessary for bringing the Yogic consciousness. A certain amount of vital purification has taken place which made the resumption of this kind of experience possible." (CWSA 30: 235)

5.

"When there is an insufficient purity in the mental being, the release appears at first to be partial and temporary; the Jiva seems to descend again into the egoistic life and the higher consciousness to be withdrawn from him. In reality, what happens is that a cloud or veil intervenes between the lower nature and the higher consciousness and the Prakriti resumes for a time its old habit of working under the pressure but not always with a knowledge or present memory of that high experience. What works in it then is a ghost of the old ego supporting a mechanical repetition of the old habits upon the remnants of confusion and impurity still left in the system. The cloud intervenes and disappears, the rhythm of ascent and descent renews

itself until the impurity has been worked out. This period of alternations may easily be long in the integral Yoga; for there an entire perfection of the system is required; it must be capable at all times and in all conditions and all circumstances, whether of action or inaction, of admitting and then living in the consciousness of the supreme Truth. Nor is it enough for the sadhaka to have the utter realisation only in the trance of Samadhi or in a motionless quietude, but he must in trance or in waking, in passive reflection or energy of action be able to remain in the constant Samadhi of the firmly founded Brahmic consciousness. But if or when our conscious being has become sufficiently pure and clear, then there is a firm station in the higher consciousness." (CWSA 23: 364)

XIX—Pray for Purification

1.

"The sadhana is a difficult one and time should not be grudged; it is only in the last stages that a very great and constant rapidity of progress can be confidently expected. As for Shakti, the descent of Shakti before the vital is pure and surrendered, has its dangers. It is better for him to pray for purification, knowledge, intensity of the heart's aspiration and as much working of the Power as he can bear and assimilate." (CWSA 30: 459) (CWSA 35: 545)

2.

"That is good progress. As for the resisting part, there is for a long time a resistance from some layer of the physical—one layer opens, another beneath remains obscure. But if the pressure from above is continuous, the resistance gets exhausted at last.

The stillness of which you speak in the meditation is a very good sign. It comes usually in that pervading way when there has been sufficient purification to make it possible. On the other side, it is itself the beginning of the laying of the foundations of the higher spiritual consciousness." (CWSA 30: 489)

XX—Purification and Descent Can Go on Progressing Side by Side

1.

"It is a mistake to dwell too much on the lower nature and its obstacles, which is the negative side of the sadhana. They have to be seen and purified, but preoccupation with them as the one important thing is not helpful. The positive side of experience of the descent is the more important thing. If one waits for the lower nature to be purified entirely and for all time before calling down the positive experience, one might have to wait for ever. It is true that the more the lower nature is purified, the easier is the descent of the higher Nature, but it is also and more true that the more the higher Nature descends, the more the lower is purified. Neither the complete purification nor the permanent and perfect manifestation can come all at once, it is a matter of time and patient progress. The two (purification and manifestation) go on progressing side by side and become more and more strong to play into each other's hands — that is the usual course of the sadhana." (CWSA 30: 39–40)

XXI—Strong and Solid Peace Is Necessary for the First Descent

1.

"Yes, when things begin to descend, they must come down on a solid basis. That is why it is necessary to have peace as the first descent and that it should become as strong and solid as possible. But in any case to contain is the first necessity—then more and more can come and settle itself. Once these two things are settled—peace and strength, one can bear any amount of everything else, Ananda, Knowledge, or whatever it may be." (CWSA 30: 451)

2.

"I don't think the peace descent is in the habit of waiting for companions—more often it likes at first to be all by itself and then call down its friends with the message, 'Come along, I have made the place all ready for you'." (CWSA 30: 447)

3.

"These things are small and relative—you may have a new table or you may not have a new table, neither way is of any very great importance and it makes no difference to the Divine Purpose in you. The one thing important is to increase calm and peace and the descent of the Divine Force, to grow in equality and inward light and

consciousness. Outward things have to be done with a great quiet, doing whatever is necessary but not exciting or upsetting yourself about anything. It is only so that you can advance steadily and quickly. When you feel the Mother's Force about you, the peace closely round you that is the one thing of importance—these small outward things can be settled in a hundred different ways, it does not really matter." (CWSA 30: 230)

4.

"The calm, the detachment, a peaceful strength and joy (atmarati ¯) must be brought down into the vital and physical as well as into the mind. If this is established, one is no longer a prey to the turmoil of the vital forces. But this calm, peace, silent strength and joy is only the first descent of the Power of the Mother into the Adhar. Beyond that is a Knowledge, an executive Power, a dynamic Ananda which is not that of the ordinary Prakriti even at its best and most sattwic, but divine in its nature.

First, however, the calm, the peace, the liberation is needed. To try to bring down the dynamic side too soon is not advisable—for then it would be a descent into a troubled and impure nature unable to assimilate it and serious perturbations might be the consequence." (CWSA 28: 42)

5.

"The descent is that of the powers of the higher consciousness which is above the head. It usually descends from centre to centre till it has occupied the whole being. But at the beginning the action is very variable. It is only when the Peace from above has not only descended but established itself in the whole system that there is a continuous action." (CWSA 30: 441)

6.

"Peace and movement on the basis of peace are the first aspects of the One to establish themselves. Bliss and light do not fix so easily or so early—they have to grow." (CWSA 30: 450)

7.

"When one has gone so far that peace from above can descend, that is a considerable progress." (CWSA 30: 452)

8.

"Yes, surely the peace can come into the outer consciousness also; it is meant to do so. It is perfectly possible for the body to bear the peace and stillness. It is more difficult for it to bear the full play of the Force; but if the peace is first established in it, then there is no difficulty of that kind." (CWSA 30: 452)

9.

"Your description of the solid cool block of peace pressing on the body and making it immobile makes it certain that it is what we call in this Yoga the descent of the higher consciousness. A deep, intense or massive substance of peace and stillness is very commonly the first of its powers that descends and many experience it in that way. At first it comes and stays only during meditation or, without the sense of physical inertness or immobility, a little while longer and afterwards is lost; but if the sadhana follows its normal course, it comes more and more, lasting longer, and in the end an enduring deep peace and inner stillness and release becomes a normal character of the consciousness, the foundation indeed of a new consciousness, calm and liberated." (CWSA 30: 465)

10.

"The Power and Peace that come down come down from the higher consciousness above your head, from a greater self of which your mind, the human mind generally, is unaware. They are the power and peace of the Divine. When they envelop you from outside the body (therefore you feel them external), it is as a protection and an atmosphere. But also they descend into the body, into the head (mind), heart and navel (vital) and through the whole body working in you and doing what is necessary to change the consciousness. When you do not feel it there, when

you feel it only as external, it is because you are very much in the external physical consciousness—but in reality it is there in your inner being working in you. When you recover the inner consciousness, you feel it again within and it wakes in you your own true consciousness, the psychic—and it is only the psychic that gives faith and devotion. It is however a great progress if, even when in the external physical consciousness, you feel the Peace enveloping you." (CWSA 30: 463–464)

11.

"The sense of peace, purity and calm felt by you is brought about by a union or strong contact of the lower with the higher consciousness; it cannot be permanent at first, but it can become so by an increased frequency and durability of the calm and peace and finally by the full descent of the eternal peace and calm and silence of the higher consciousness into the lower nature." (CWSA 28: 66)

XXII—Permanent Peace and Purity to Avoid Seizing by Lower Powers First

1.

"The Peace, Purity and Calm of the Self must be fixed—otherwise the active Descent may find the forces it awakes seized on by lower Powers and a confusion created. That has happened with many." (CWSA 30: 450)

XXIII—What Peace Does

1.

"If peace becomes permanent in the inner being, then the subnature becomes an external and superficial thing—one part of the consciousness is then free; unmoved by anything that happens, it regards the surface turmoil as something not belonging to itself. If the peace extends in the same way into the external parts also, then the whole being becomes free and the inferior nature is felt only as something moving about in the atmosphere, trying to enter but unable to do so. But this of course happens only when the descents of Peace have turned into a massive stability of Peace." (CWSA 29: 153–154)

2.

"The peace that descends from above can stop the lower action, if it settles in all the being. But that is not sufficient if one wants to develop the dynamic side of the being also on the lines of Yoga." (CWSA 30: 453)

XXIV—Descent of Peace Repeats Itself but Cannot Make a Radical Change Until It Settles and Becomes Normal

1.

"Once these experiences [*of peace and the descent of force*] begin, they repeat themselves usually, whether the general condition is good or not. But naturally they cannot make a radical change until they settle themselves and become normal in the whole being or at least in the inner part of it. In the latter case the old movements can still come, but they are felt as something quite superficial and the sadhana increases in spite of them. There is no question of good or wicked. If some part of the being even has been opened the experiences come." (CWSA 30: 25–26)

2.

"The experience itself is that of concentration in a flame of aspiration with the result of an ascension into the higher planes of consciousness where the separative self disappears into the universal. The second is an experience of the descent of the higher consciousness through the spinal cord from the mental to the vital centres with the result of a momentary experience of that higher consciousness in its wide universality. The experience once had repeated itself but always with the same

momentariness. It is the permanence of this experience that is in this Yoga the foundation of the spiritual consciousness and the spiritual transformation—as distinguished from the psychic which proceeds from the inner heart." (CWSA 30: 467)

3.

"It was the descent of the higher consciousness not only into the mind but the whole body and the whole being. That is what you must get fixed in you, having it not only as a descent but as your normal consciousness. Of course that does not happen in a day (except in rare cases). The descent repeats itself until it is strong enough to hold the whole body." (CWSA 30: 495)

4.

"And when, by these successive descents, we reach the veil that reveals thee as it is lifted, O Lord, who can describe the intensity of Life that penetrates the whole being, the radiance of the Light that floods it, the sublimity of the Love that transforms it for ever!" (CWM 2: 21)

XXV—The More the Calm, Peace, Joy and Happiness Descend, the Stronger Is the Foundation

1.

"The more the calm, peace, joy and happiness descend and take possession, the stronger the foundation. It is the sign of the contact.

The other thing needed is the descent of the consciousness which you felt in the heart and breast. That will come of itself, if this devotion and sole dependence on the Light continues." (CWSA 29: 361–362)

2.

"The descent of calm and light which you experience is a sign that the sadhana has actually begun in you; it shows that you are open now consciously to the Divine Force and its workings. The descent of calm and light into the being is the beginning of the foundation of the yoga. At first it may be felt in the mind and upper part only, but afterwards goes further down until it touches all the centres and is experienced in the whole body. At first it comes only for a moment or two; afterwards it lasts for longer periods." (CWM 14: 55)

XXVI—The Descent of Peace and Force Establishes a Foundation in Sadhana

1.

"It is the Mother's force that descended to work in the system. There are two things that have to be established in order to make a foundation for the workings of the sadhana in the waking consciousness, 1st a descent of Peace from above, 2nd a descent of the Force. If one has these two things permanently established in the consciousness, then one has the basis." (CWSA 30: 455)

2.

"The experiences you have had are very clear evidence that you have the capacity for Yoga. The first decisive experiences in this Yoga are a calm and peace that is felt, first somewhere in the being and in the end in all the being, and the descent of a Power and Force into the body which will take up the whole adhar and work in it to transform mind, life and body into the instrumentation of the Divine Consciousness. The two experiences of which you wrote in your letter are the beginning of this calm and the descent of this Force. Much has to be done before they can be established or persistently effective, but that they should come at this stage is a clear proof of capacity to receive. It must be remembered however that the Yoga is not easy and cannot be done without the rising of many obstacles

and much lapse of time—so if you take it up it must be with a firm resolve to carry it through to the end with a whole-hearted sincerity, faith, patience and courage." (CWSA 30: 455)

3.

"The being is not supposed to remain always empty. When the calm and peace of the pure existence is established, Force also has to descend as well as Light, Ananda and other things." (CWSA 30: 449)

4.

"By Force I mean not mental or vital energy but the Divine Force from above—as peace comes from above and wideness also, so does this Force (Shakti). Nothing, not even thinking or meditating can be done without some action of Force. The Force I speak of is a Force for illumination, transformation, purification, all that has to be done in the Yoga, for removal of the hostile forces and the wrong movements—it is also of course for external work, whether great or small in appearance does not matter—if that is part of the Divine Will. I do not mean any personal force egoistic or rajasic." (CWSA 30: 455–456)

5.

"Yes, it [*the Force*] is quite concrete. Usually at first it descends of itself from time to time—and also one calls it

in face of a difficulty. But eventually it is always there supporting or determining all the action of the being." (CWSA 30: 456)

6.

"The Force comes down as soon as it finds an opening and acts in the Adhara whenever it is ready. What determines the descent cannot always be mentally fixed. Aspiration, call, will, prayer, etc. create a favourable precondition in the head or heart or anywhere else and are sometimes the determining cause." (CWSA 30: 456)

7.

"It is good. The more you keep that dominant sense of the force and the calmness and increase it, the more the other feeling [*of inadequacy and restlessness*] will diminish and fade. It always happens that at first the Power and Peace only press, touch, invade at places, until a time comes when a part of the being always feels in that condition however much disturbance may assail the surface. Afterwards the disturbance is more and more pushed out till it is felt only outside the being, not in it. When that too goes, there is the complete peace and the full foundation." (CWSA 30: 444)

8.

"Your letter of today makes it very clear what is happening. The Force that you felt had come down at first, came to open the way for the descent of the higher consciousness into the mind and body. That was why it descended with such force and the difficulty of holding or assimilating it was simply because the body was unaccustomed. But as often happens the Force is preparing its own reception and habituating the body to the descent. Having done that sufficiently it is coming down as a massive peace. The higher consciousness in its descent takes several fundamental forms—peace, power and strength, light, knowledge, Ananda. Usually it is the peace that descends first. This is not a mental, vital or physical peace of the ordinary kind, but something from above (spiritual), very firm, solid and concrete. It is its concreteness that makes you feel like a still massive block—a mass of the higher consciousness in place of the more tenuous substance of the ordinary nature. As for its being worth having, you can see that it is—it is indeed the beginning of the real transformation—all the rest hitherto has been mainly preparation and clearing of difficulties and impediments through all these years. This serene peace and massive stillness has to stabilise itself, fill the whole nature, widen itself until all existence internal and external seems full of it. This may take time, but the beginning once there it is sure to take place, if one is steady and constant. It

becomes besides the sure base on which all the rest,—power and strength, light and knowledge, Ananda and divine love, can come in and securely fill the consciousness." (CWSA 30: 444–445)

9.

"Yes, it is a very encouraging progress. If you keep the wideness and calm as you are keeping it and also the love for the Mother in the heart, then all is safe—for it means the double foundation of the Yoga—the descent of the higher consciousness with its peace, freedom and security from above and the openness of the psychic which keeps all the effort or all the spontaneous movement turned towards the true goal." (CWSA 30: 466)

10.

"As for the Force descending into the head, it has two sides to it—one is peace and when that is prominent, there is the sense of coolness; when there is a strong dynamic action instead, the feeling may be of heat, Agni-power. Most people feel these two things; they are not imagination." (CWSA 30: 462)

11.

"*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)

XXVII—When the Peace Becomes Stable, No Assimilation Is Needed

1.

"If the peace once becomes stable, there is no farther assimilation needed for that, as that means the whole system is sufficiently prepared to receive and absorb continuously. There may be periods of assimilation necessary for other things, but these periods need not interrupt the inner status. For instance if Force or Ananda or Knowledge begin to descend from above, there might be interruptions and probably would be, the system not being able to absorb a continuous flow, but the peace would remain in the inner being. Or there might even be something like periods of struggle on the surface, but the inner being would remain calm and still, watching and undisturbed and, if there is knowledge established within, understanding the action. Only for that the whole being vital, physical, material must have become open and receptive to the peace. Peace would then go on perhaps deepening and becoming wider and wider, but periods of interruption and assimilation would not be needed." (CWSA 30: 480)

XXVIII—Spiritual Peace Brings Wideness

1.

"The usual mental means to widen the consciousness is to think of and feel oneself as spreading out into space beyond the body—as a corrective to the thought and feeling of oneself as identified with the body and shut up in it. After a time this leads to a substantial experience of wide consciousness beyond the body. The means to quieten the physical consciousness is to detach oneself from all restless vibrations, not by any struggle or effort but by a simple easy will of quietude. However now that the higher Force is bringing quietude, these mental means may not be necessary—for the peace from above usually brings the wideness of the self—though for some it brings it at once, for others it takes time.

Anyhow, the spiritual opening has been clearly made in you; the rest is a matter of development and time." (CWSA 30: 445)

XXIX—After the Peace, the Strength Has to Come Down

1.

"It is good—the strength is the next thing that has to come down after the peace and join with it. Eventually the two become one." (CWSA 30: 451)

2.

"*Here it is written: 'The experience of this 'solid block' feeling indicates the descent of a solid strength and peace....'*

It is always the same thing: people writing letters, you under-stand; they describe their experiences. So he uses the same words that they use for answering. This 'solid block' feeling within oneself—he explains what it means: he says that it indicates the descent of a strength." (CWM 6: 360–361)

3.

"The experience of this 'solid block' feeling indicates the descent of a solid strength and peace into the external being,—but into the vital physical most. It is this always that is the foundation, the sure basis into which all else (Ananda, light, knowledge, bhakti) can descend in the future and stand on it or play safely. The numbness was

there in the other experience because the movement was inward; but here the Yogashakti is coming *outward* into the fully awake external nature,—as a first step towards the establishment of the Yoga and its experiences there. So the numbness, which was a sign of the consciousness tending to draw back from the external parts, is not there." (CWSA 30: 451)

XXX—The Descent Must First Take Place in the Inner Being

1.

"A going up and up higher, though a part of the total necessary movement, does not by itself have any effect on the outer being. It only divides the consciousness into two and its only logical outcome is Nirvana. I have always written that the descent is necessary to change the nature; ascent is useful to open the higher planes and exalt the level of the consciousness, but it does not change the lower being except superficially by opening to it certain possibilities it had not before. But the descent must first take place in the inner being. When the higher consciousness is settled in the inner being, then it can change the outer. But necessarily the descent must be dynamic, not merely that of a static peace; the inner peace must itself become dynamic.

The descent whether of peace or force or light or knowledge or Ananda must occupy the whole inner being down to the inner physical. Without that how is the outer to be transformed at all? It is an amazing idea to suppose that the outer can be changed while the inner is left to itself. What you had in the inner being was a static stillness which did not even entirely occupy the inner physical except at times—that was why the dynamic descent was necessary, but in the inner being or if possible the whole

being, the inner outflowing into the outer, not in the outer being to the exclusion of the inner." (CWSA 30: 417–418)

2.

"Nobody said that you should not take the higher being as a first station. The question was about enforcing the peace of the higher being in the lower parts down to the physical so as to (1) create that separateness which would prevent the inner being from being affected by the superficial disturbance and resistance, (2) make it easier for the force and other powers of the higher being to descend." (CWSA 30: 452–453)

3.

"It is good that you felt the peace within and the movement in the heart. That shows the force is working not only from above but inside you, and this promises a farther progress. The full opening will come in time—the important thing is that you are on the right way and advancing more quickly than you realise." (CWSA 30: 463)

XXXI—Descent Sometimes Produces Sleepiness

1.

"It [*sleepiness during the day*] may possibly be due to the attempt of the higher consciousness to descend then. It sometimes produces this effect of sleepiness on the body, for the physical attempts to go inside to meet the descending consciousness and if it is not accustomed to enter into one of the higher samadhis on such occasions, the going inside translates itself to the physical as sleep. The exercise may have contributed, of course, by its reaction on the body." (CWSA 31: 445)

2.

"You need not worry about that [*the body's tendency to sleep*]. When there is a strong inward tendency, the body not being yet conscious enough to share the experience in a waking state tries to assimilate the descending forces through sleep. This is a common experience. When it has assimilated enough, it will be more ready." (CWSA 30: 485)

XXXII—How to Allow the Divine Force to Act

1.

"It is quite true that, left to yourself, you can do nothing; that is why you have to be in contact with the Force which is there to do for you what you cannot do for yourself. The only thing you have to do is to allow the Force to act and put yourself on its side, which means to have faith in it, to rely upon it, not to trouble and harass yourself, to remember it quietly, to call upon it quietly, to let it act quietly. If you do that, all else will be done for you—not all at once, because there is much to clear away, but still it will be done steadily and more and more." (CWSA 29: 188)

2.

"Passivity can be only to the Divine Force when it is felt at work,—there can be no passivity to other forces, for that would be dangerous in the extreme. Passivity does *not* mean a blank mind—it means allowing the Divine Force to work without interference of the mental preferences, vital desires or physical disinclinations. As for freedom from ego or desire, that is the general law of all Yoga, but it cannot be acquired by merely giving up work. The majority of Sannyasins are not at all free from desire or ego." (CWSA 29: 188–189)

3.

"One feels the Force only when one is in conscious contact with it." (CWSA 29: 189)

4.

"It is a great progress, a decisive advance if, at the time the Force is acting behind the screen, you feel that it is there, that the help and support, the more enlightened consciousness is there still. This is the second stage in the sadhana. There is a third when there is no screen and the Force and all else are always felt whether actively working or pausing during a transition." (CWSA 29: 189)

5.

"Remind yourself always that the Divine Force is there, that you have felt it and that, even if you seem to lose consciousness of it for a time or it seems something distant, still it is there and is sure to prevail. For those whom the Force has touched and taken up, belong thenceforth to the Divine." (CWSA 29: 189)

XXXIII—Do Not Pull Down the Force; Wait in Peace, Aspire and Draw

1.

"If you have to bear the pressure of the Divine Descent, you must be very strong and powerful, otherwise you would be shaken to pieces. Some persons ask, 'Why has not the Divine come yet?' Because you are not ready. If a little drop makes you sing and dance and scream, what would happen if the whole thing came down?

Therefore do we say to people who have not a strong and firm and capacious basis in the body and the vital and the mind, 'Do not pull', meaning 'Do not try to pull at the forces of the Divine, but wait in peace and calmness.' For they would not be able to bear the descent. But to those who possess the necessary basis and foundation we say, on the contrary, 'Aspire and draw.' For they would be able to receive and yet not be upset by the forces descending from the Divine." (CWM 3: 11)

2.

"I mean [*by writing 'let the Force come in'*] that you need not pull it down, but you should aid its entry by your full aspiration and assent." (CWSA 30: 480)

3.

"This sort of giddiness and weakness and disturbance ought not to take place. When it comes it shows that more

Force is being pulled down than is assimilated by the body. At such times you ought to rest till the disturbance has passed and there is a proper balance." (CWSA 30: 481)

4.

"It is certainly a mistake to bring down the light by force—to pull it down. The supramental cannot be taken by storm. When the time is ready it will open of itself — but first there is a great deal to be done and that must be done patiently and without haste." (CWSA 30: 481)

5.

"Can you explain in a few master strokes what you mean by 'pulling down'? As I understand it, it is when one makes mental efforts of concentration and meditation without having any eagerness for it.

That is not what is meant by pulling. When one is open and too eager and tries to pull down the force, experience etc. instead of letting it descend quietly, that is called pulling. Many people pull at the Mother's forces — trying to take more than they can easily assimilate and disturbing the working." (CWSA 32: 223)

XXXIV—What Prevents the Force from Descending?

1. The restless activity of the mind gives no room for the descent

1a.
"What the sadhak has to be specially warned against in the wrong processes of the intellect is, first, any mistaking of mental ideas and impressions or intellectual conclusions for realisation; secondly, the restless activity of the mere mind, *cañcalaṁ manaḥ*, which disturbs the spontaneous accuracy of psychic and spiritual experience and gives no room for the descent of the true illuminating knowledge or else deforms it as soon as it touches or even before it fully touches the human mental plane." (CWSA 31: 14)

1b.
"If the consciousness is always busy with small mental movements,—especially accompanied, as they usually are, by a host of vital movements, desires, prepossessions and all else that vitiates human thinking, even apart from the native insufficiency of reason,—what room can there be for a new order of knowledge, for fundamental experiences or for those deep and stupendous upsurgings or descents of the Spirit? It is indeed possible for the mind in the midst of its activities to be suddenly taken by surprise, overwhelmed, swept aside while all is flooded with a

sudden inrush of spiritual experience. But if afterwards it begins questioning, doubting, theorising, surmising what this might be and whether it is true or not, what else can the spiritual Power do but retire and wait for the bubbles of the mind to cease?" (CWSA 28: 340)

2. Lack of receptivity in some parts can cause disequilibrium

2a.

"You have been told: 'Open yourself, you will receive the Force.' You have been told: 'Have faith, be of goodwill and you will be protected.' And indeed you are bathed in the Consciousness, bathed in the Force, bathed in the Protection and to the extent you have faith and open yourself, you receive all that, and it helps you in keeping fit and in rejecting the little inner disturbances and re-establishing order when these come, in protecting yourself against small attacks or accidents which might have happened. But if somewhere in your being—either in your body or even in your vital or mind, either in several parts or even in a single one—there is an incapacity to receive the descending Force, this acts like a grain of sand in a machine. You know, a fine machine working quite well with everything going all right, and you put into it just a little sand (nothing much, only a grain of sand), suddenly everything is damaged and the machine stops. Well, just a

little lack of receptivity somewhere, something that is unable to receive the Force, that is completely shut up (when one looks at it, it becomes as it were a little dark spot somewhere, a tiny thing hard as a stone: the Force cannot enter into it, it refuses to receive it — either it cannot or it will not) and immediately that produces a great imbalance; and this thing that was moving upward, that was blooming so wonderfully, finds itself sick, and sometimes just when you were in the normal equilibrium; you were in good health, everything was going on well, you had nothing to complain about. One day when you grasped a new idea, received a new impulse, when you had a great aspiration and received a great force and had a marvellous experience, a beautiful experience opening to you inner doors, giving you a knowledge you did not have before; then you were sure that everything was going to be all right.... The next day, you are taken ill. So you say: "Still that? It is impossible! That should not happen." But it was quite simply what I have just said: a grain of sand. There was something that could not receive; immediately it brings about a disequilibrium. Even though very small it is enough, and you fall ill." (CWM 5: 176)

3. Man's insincerity prevents the force from descending

3a.

"Yoga is the way to become sincere in all parts of the being.

It is difficult to be sincere, but at least one can be mentally sincere; this is what can be demanded of Aurovilians. The force is there, present as never before; man's insincerity prevents it from descending, from being felt. The world lives in falsehood, all relations between men have until now been based on falsehood and deceit." (CWM 13: 268)

XXXV—Why Descent Is Necessary in Yoga

1.

"As for the things that are necessary to be done [*in Yoga*], they can be done much more easily by the Force and Peace descending (bringing the solid strength) than by your own mental effort." (CWSA 30: 254)

2.

"All the consciousness in the human being who is the mental embodied in living matter has to rise so as to meet the higher consciousness; the higher consciousness has also to descend into mind, into life, into matter. In that way the barriers will be removed and the higher consciousness will be able to take up the whole lower nature and transform it by the power of the supermind." (CWSA 30: 416)

3.

"The ego person in us cannot transform itself by its own force or will or knowledge or by any virtue of its own into the nature of the Divine; all it [ego] can do is to fit itself for the transformation and make more and more its surrender to that which it seeks to become. As long as the ego is at work in us, our personal action is and must always be in its nature a part of the lower grades of existence; it is obscure or half–enlightened, limited in its field, very

partially effective in its power. If a spiritual transformation, not a mere illumining modification of our nature, is to be done at all, we must call in the Divine Shakti to effect that miraculous work in the individual; for she alone has the needed force, decisive, all–wise and illimitable. But the entire substitution of the divine for the human personal action is not at once entirely possible." (CWSA 23: 86)

4.

"All these [difficuties] things are common to every path of Yoga; they are the normal difficulties, fluctuations and struggles which come across the path of spiritual effort. But in this Yoga [Integral Yoga] there is an order or succession of the workings of the secret Force which may vary greatly in its circumstances in each sadhak, but still maintains its general line. Our evolution has brought the being up out of inconscient Matter into the Ignorance of mind, life and body tempered by an imperfect knowledge and is trying to lead us into the light of the Spirit, to lift us into that light and to bring the light down into us, into body and life as well as mind and heart and to fill with it all that we are. This and its consequences, of which the greatest is the union with the Divine and life in the divine consciousness, is the meaning of the integral transformation. Mind is our present topmost faculty; it is through the thinking mind and the heart with the soul, the psychic being behind them that we have to grow into the

Spirit, for what the Force first tries to bring about is to fix the mind in the right central idea, faith or mental attitude and the right aspiration and poise of the heart and to make these sufficiently strong and firm to last in spite of other things in the mind and heart which are other than or in conflict with them. Along with this it brings whatever experiences, realisations or descent or growth of knowledge the mind of the individual is ready for at the time or as much of it, however small, as is necessary for its further progress: sometimes these realisations and experiences are very great and abundant, sometimes few and small or negligible; in some there seems to be in this first stage nothing much of these things or nothing decisive—the Force seems to concentrate on a preparation of the mind only." (CWSA 31: 689)

XXXVI—Foundation Is Quickly Laid If Meditation Brings a Descent

1.

"Meditation is one means of the approach to the Divine and a great way, but it cannot be called a short cut—for most it is a long and difficult though very high ascent. It can by no means be short unless it brings a descent and even then it is only a foundation that is quickly laid—afterwards meditation has to build laboriously a big superstructure on that foundation. It is very indispensable, but there is nothing of the short cut about it." (CWSA 29: 212) (CWSA 35: 743)

2.

"What do you call meditation? Shutting the eyes and concentrating? It is only one method for calling down the true consciousness. To join with the true consciousness or feel its descent is the only thing important and if it comes without the orthodox method, as it always did with me, so much the better. Meditation is only a means or device, the true movement is when even walking, working or speaking one is still in sadhana." (CWSA 29: 300) (CWSA 35: 229)

3.

"It seems to be some tamas or inertia coming down on the system. It is sometimes like that when the vital gets dissatisfied with the conditions or with what has been

attained and initiates a sort of non-cooperation or passive resistance, saying, 'As I am not satisfied, I won't take interest in anything or help you to do anything.'

It may be because I asked you to stop meditating and to wait. The vital does not like waiting. But I had to tell you that because of the burning of the centres, the disturbance of sleep and the rest—these must go before you can meditate in the right way and with success. If you meditate at all now, it should be only in calm and peace with a very quiet aspiration for the divine calm and peace to descend into you.

It is also perhaps due to your penchant for Nirvana. For the desire of Nirvana easily brings this kind of collapse of the energies. Nirvana is not the aim of my Yoga—but whether for Nirvana or for this Yoga, calm and peace in the whole being are the necessary foundation of all siddhi." (CWSA 31: 139)

4.

Q: Please give your Grace to this unfortunate lady, whose letter I enclose. Be kind enough to instruct me what I should write to her. She prays for your *upadeśa* and blessings.

A: But it is not by *upadeśa* that this sadhana is given or carried on. It is only those who are capable by aspiration and meditation on the Mother to open and receive her

action and working within that can succeed in this Yoga." (CWSA 32: 136)

XXXVII—The Pressure on the Head Is the Pressure of the Higher Consciousness

1.

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

(1) The feeling of calm and comparative absence of disturbing thoughts. This means the growth of quietude of mind which is necessary for a fully effective meditation.

(2) The pressure on the head and the movements within it. The pressure is that of the Force of the higher consciousness above the mind pressing on the mind (the mind centres are in the head and throat) and penetrating into it. Once it enters there it prepares the mind for opening to it more fully and the movements within the head are due to this working. Once the head centres and spaces are open one feels it descending freely as a current or otherwise. Afterwards it opens similarly the centres below in the body. The physical movement of the head must be due to the body not being accustomed to the pressure and penetration of the Force. When it is able to receive and assimilate, these movements no longer take place." (CWSA 30: 466)

2.

"It [*a pressure felt in meditation*] is what we call the pressure of the Force (the Force of the higher spiritual or

divine consciousness, the Mother's Force); it comes in various forms, vibrations, currents, waves, a wide flow, a shower like rain etc. It passes to each centre in turn, the crown of the head, the forehead centre, throat, heart, navel centres down to the Muladhara and spreads too throughout the body.

The rotatory movement is the movement of the Force when it is working and forming something in the being." (CWSA 30: 469)

3.

"Pressure, throbbing, electrical vibrations are all signs of the working of the Force. The places indicate the field of action—the top of the head is the summit of the thinking mind where it communicates with the higher consciousness; the neck or throat is the seat of the physical, externalising or expressive mind; the ear is the place of communication with the inner mind centre by which thoughts etc. enter into the personal being from the general Nature. The sternum at the point indicated1 holds the psychic and emotional centre, with its apex on the spinal column behind." (CWSA 30: 469)

1 The correspondent wrote that she felt electrical vibrations in the backbone at a point in the chest parallel to the bottom of the sternum.—Ed.

4.

"When the Force comes down one at first feels a pressure. Afterwards it begins to enter the body, when once the way is open for it. After entering the body it goes on working each time it descends, for the transformation of the nature." (CWSA 30: 469–470)

5.

"This pressure on the head always comes at the beginning; it is the pressure of the Force on the adhar preparing to make its way into it. The feeling lasts so long as there is a resistance in the adhar to the entrance and working of the Force. If the mind opens to the Power, it will cease and you will feel the Power working in you or within you." (CWSA 30: 470)

6.

"Tell him that the pressure on the head is a sign of the descent and working of the Force from above and of a certain resistance in the adhar which almost all sadhaks have at first. The calm is the result of the working. When the resistance disappears, the pressure is no longer felt but one becomes conscious of the working and of the calm descending into the body from centre to centre." (CWSA 30: 470)

7.

"When there is a pressure of the Force on the Adhar to work on it or enter, this [*feeling of heaviness in the head*] is often felt, especially if there is a working of the Force in the head. This heaviness disappears if the system receives and assimilates the Force and there is a free flow in the body—till then the pressure or some kind of heaviness is often felt at one centre or another where the Force is working." (CWSA 30: 470–471)

8.

"If it is only a weight or pressure on the head, it may be only the pressure of the Mother's Force. It comes like that to most people. Once the consciousness is open and the Force enters, there is no longer this feeling." (CWSA 30: 471)

9.

"A heaviness which gives strength is likely to be the indication of a descent. Sensations like a biting or pricking in the head often accompany it. It is usually a sign of some force from above trying to make its way through or to work in the physical stuff so as to prepare it for receiving." (CWSA 30: 471)

10.

"The pressure is usually felt only when the Force is acting on the consciousness in order to create an opening somewhere or for some other purpose. As soon as that is done, the pressure is not felt but instead a changed condition or else the working of the Force within but without any sense of pressure." (CWSA 30: 472)

11.

"The action of the Force does not always create a pressure. When it does not need to press, it acts quietly." (CWSA 30: 473)

12.

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

13.

"Sometimes the descent comes with great force in order to open something, afterwards it becomes more quiet and normal until the consciousness is ready for a more sustained descent." (CWSA 30: 479)

XXXVIII—Swaying Movement in Descent

1.

"The swaying motion takes place when the body is not accustomed to the descent; it tries by the movement to assimilate what is coming down." (CWSA 30: 481)

2.

"The swaying is due probably to the body not being habituated to receive the Force — it should cease as soon as the body is accustomed." (CWSA 30: 481)

XXXIX—What Comes from Above Is Felt as …

1.

"Whatever comes from above can come like that in waves—whether it is Light or Force or Peace or Ananda. In your case it was the Force working on the mind in waves. It is true also that when it was like that, not in currents or as a rain or as a quiet flood, it is Mahakali's Force that is working. The first necessity when it is so, is not to fear." (CWSA 30: 475)

2.

"The descent of the Consciousness from above is often felt as a flow of water. Also the image of the drilling open of the head to receive it is frequent (it symbolises the opening of the mind to the higher consciousness)." (CWSA 30: 475)

3.

"The stream which you feel coming down on the head and pouring into you is indeed a current of the Mother's Force; it is so that it is often felt; it flows into the body in currents and works there to liberate and change the consciousness. As the consciousness changes and develops, you will begin yourself to understand the meaning and working of these things." (CWSA 30: 475)

4.

"The quiet flow is necessary for permeating the lower parts. The big descents open the way and bring constant reinforcement and the culminating force at the end—but the quiet flow is also needed." (CWSA 30: 475)

5.

"I am glad to hear that these experiences are coming—they are a sign of rapid progress coming. The descent as of a drizzling rain is a very characteristic and well-known way of descent of the higher Consciousness; it brings peace but it also brings all other possibilities of the higher Consciousness too and, as you felt, the seeds of transformation of the physical consciousness—by the coming in it of the seeds of the powers and qualities of the higher Nature." (CWSA 30: 475–476)

6.

"The description of the Power he feels—which is obviously the true thing—is very accurate—it is so, like rain or a fall of snow, that it often comes at first. I take it from his use of the word 'around', that it is an enveloping power that he feels. It does not begin for all in the same way—some only feel it above their heads occasionally descending on them and entering." (CWSA 30: 484–485)

7.

"I am very glad that the experience we have been working to bring to you has come with such force and is increasing. **I**t is the concrete descent of the higher consciousness, which once it settles marks always a definite turning-point in the sadhana. Even if it does not settle with a full stability at once, yet when it has once come with so much strength, there cannot be the least doubt that it will come more and more till it has done its work and is your permanent consciousness. The shower and drizzle, the hold above the head and in the heart, the envelopment, the flaming of Agni within, the sense of firmness and solidity, the Peace and security and devotion, the sense of the Mother's hold are all signs of the descent—eventually it will penetrate everywhere and become something solid and stable occupying the whole consciousness and body." (CWSA 30: 476)

The correspondent felt 'as if held in a hand of the Power'. — Ed.

8.

"The coolness comes when the Force descends with peace and harmony into the vital and the body." (CWSA 30: 476)

9.

"A sensation of coolness indicates usually some touch or descent of peace. It is felt as very cold by the human vital

because the latter is always in a fever of restlessness." (CWSA 30: 477)

10.

"Pleasant coolness or coldness usually indicates a pacifying force bringing down calm or release. Knee to toe = the field of physical material consciousness." (CWSA 30: 477)

11.

"The coolness is always a quieting force making for peace." (CWSA 30: 476)

12.

"This coolness [*felt in a passage rising from the heart to the head and then above it*] very often comes with the peace from above. If the passage is felt going up above the head, it means that there is now a direct communication with the higher Consciousness, the necessary opening having been made." (CWSA 30: 476)

13.

"The feeling of stoniness is very usually a first impression in the body of the stillness in the cells which comes with the down flow of the Peace." (CWSA 30: 477)

14.

"A sound does sometimes come with a particular descent of the consciousness or force from above." (CWSA 30: 477–478)

[In this case the correspondent heard the faint sound of dhum . . . dhum... dhum. — Ed.]

15.

"If it is a feeling of a covering being perforated, then that is a sensation one often has when the Force is opening a way for itself through some resistance—here it must be in some part of the physical mind.

Keep full reliance on the Mother. When one does that, the victory even if delayed, is sure." (CWSA 30: 473)

16.

"The feeling of the vibration of the Mother's Force around the head is more than a mental idea or even a mental realisation, it is an experience. This vibration is indeed the action of the Mother's Force which is first felt above the head or around it, then afterwards within the head." (CWSA 32: 211)

17.

"It [*the sensation of an electric current in the spine*] is the flowing of the force through the spine. In the Tantric system the spine is considered as the natural passage of

the Force, because it is in the spine that all the six centres rest." (CWSA 30: 474)

18.

"Your experience while going to the lawyers was an opening to the Force from above which, if sudden, is often attended by this kind of loud sound and the sensation of the opening of the head—it is in the subtle body that this opening of the head takes place though the sensation is felt as if physical. The Force came down and went up presided over by the Mother's forms of Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati and made the movement of ascent and descent (here in the spinal column which is the main channel of the Yogic force passing through the centres) which helps to join the higher with the lower consciousness. As a result came the feeling of identity with myself in your body. The cough shows probably some difficulty against concentration in the physical mind. The best is not to force concentration, but to remain quiet and call and let things work themselves out through the force of the Mother." (CWSA 30: 478)

19.

"The fact that you don't feel a force does not prove that it is not there. The steam-engine does not feel a force moving it, but the force is there. A man is not a steam-engine? He is very little better, for he is conscious only of

some bubbling on the surface which he calls himself and is absolutely unconscious of all the subconscient, subliminal, superconscient forces moving him. (This is a fact which is being more and more established by modern psychology though it has got hold only of the lower forces and not the higher, so you need not turn up your rational nose at it.) He twitters intellectually (= foolishly) about the surface results and attributes them all to his 'noble self', ignoring the fact that his noble self is hidden far away from his own vision behind the veil of his dimly sparkling intellect and the reeking fog of his vital feelings, emotions, impulses, sensations and impressions. So your argument is utterly absurd and futile." (CWSA 29: 184)

XL—The Order of Descent into the Being

1.

"It [*the higher consciousness*] enters usually first into the mind, then into the vital and then into the body, because it is these that have to be changed and that is the natural order." (CWSA 30: 445)

2.

"Whatever comes from above the head, whether it is Presence, Peace, Ananda, or anything else, normally descends into the head first, then after occupying all the mental centres it comes down into the heart and from there goes down into the vital centres and occupies the whole body. If there is a resistance, it is felt as a weight and a pressure—when the way is open, the pressure disappears and there is only the thing itself. It enters each centre as soon as the way to it is open." (CWSA 30: 445)

3.

"The Force usually comes down through the head and afterwards descends lower in the body to the heart, afterwards through the navel downwards." (CWSA 30: 446)

4.

"If you mean the descent of the higher consciousness, that is felt in the heart region, not only in the centre, just as it

is felt in the head. The touching of the head is only a first pressure. Afterwards there is a feeling of a mass of peace, force, light, Ananda or consciousness coming down in the head directly and descending further to the chest and so to the navel and through the body. For some it takes weeks or months, in others it descends rapidly." (CWSA 30: 446)

5.

"It can be a rushing of Force into the subtle body which the physical records and feels the effect. When Force descends into the head it means that it has come down into the mind, when it is felt in the heart it means it has entered into the emotional vital, when it is in the Muladhara and below it means it is acting on the physical consciousness. The centres are all in the subtle body although there are corresponding parts in the gross physical." (CWSA 30: 496)

6.

"All experiences that penetrate the centres are recorded in the body and seem to be the body's experiences,1 but one has to distinguish between the reflection of the experiences there and the experiences that belong to the physical body consciousness itself. It is a matter of consciousness and fine discernment. There is no absolute law about the time." (CWSA 30: 496)

[The correspondent wrote that he sometimes felt peace or silence or force as 'tangibly present' in his body.—Ed.]

7.

"It [*how the body receives the higher dynamism*] depends on the condition of the body or rather of the physical and the most material consciousness. In one condition it is tamasic, inert, unopen and cannot bear or cannot receive or cannot contain the force; in another rajas predominates and tries to seize on the dynamism, but wastes and spills and loses it; in another there is receptivity, harmony, balance and the result is a harmonious action without strain or effort." (CWSA 30: 495)

8.

"Usually the first thing that descends from the higher consciousness is its deep and entire peace—the second is the Light, here the white light of the Mother. When the higher consciousness descends or is intensely felt, there is very usually an opening of the limited personal being into the cosmic consciousness—one feels a wide and infinite being which alone exists, the identification with the body and even the sense of the body disappears, the limited personal consciousness is lost in the Cosmic Existence. You had all this first in the impersonal way, but after the burning up of the psychic fire, you felt the Personal

wideness, the cosmic consciousness of the Divine Mother and received her blessing." (CWSA 30: 417)

9.

"The experience you had was simply the descent of the Divine Force into the body. By your attitude and aspiration you called for it to work in you, so it came. Such a descent brings naturally a deep inward condition and a silence of the mind, and it may bring much more—peace, a sense of liberation, happiness, Ananda. It is very often attended as in this experience by a light or luminosity. It was felt enveloping the upper part of the body down to the cardiac centre, because it is these centres, the head and heart centres that are first invaded and occupied by whatever descends from above, Consciousness, Force, Light or Ananda. Usually, there is at first a pressure from above on the head, then one feels something entering the higher part of the head and then the whole head is occupied, as you feel now with the *fourmillement* at the time of concentration. Once the head with its mental centres is open and occupied, the Force descends rapidly to the heart centre, unless there is some obstacle or a resistance in the higher vital parts. From there it sends its stream into the whole body and begins to occupy the vital and physical centres—from the navel to the Muladhara. The coming of this experience, occupation of the body by the Force from above, is a great step forward in the sadhana.

The fear of a syncope was due only to the sanskara in the mind; it must be dismissed. The Force can very well come down in the full waking consciousness; if it brings a kind of samadhi, it is usually a conscious inner condition — the consciousness taken away from outward things, but in full power within. Even if a trance came, it would be a trance and not a swoon." (CWSA 30: 456–457)

10.

"The good condition of openness with the Force descending and the constant remembrance—or whatever other form the condition takes—is the beginning of the true consciousness and its duration is always short at the beginning, because the ordinary consciousness is not accustomed to it, but to something else. But it always increases in duration and power until it is able to maintain itself even when the outer consciousness is occupied with other things. At first it remains there as something behind which emerges as soon as the outer preoccupation ends; afterwards it remains behind, but as something just felt, and in a later stage it is always there, so that there are two consciousnesses, the inner consciousness always connected with the Mother and full of her working or her presence or both and the surface consciousness occupied with outer things. Finally, even the surface consciousness begins to feel the direct connection in action itself. One need not mind if there are intervals when the true condition

is not there. It does not prove that you are unfit; it is only a period in which what is not yet changed comes up to be worked upon and prepared for change. When the inner consciousness is well established, then these periods take place only in the surface consciousness and are no longer troublesome as before.

P. S. Probably the difficulty you feel is in the externalising mind the centre of which is in the throat. When there is no resistance there, the Force comes down to the heart level and below." (CWSA 30: 457–458)

11.

"The Force when it descends tries to open the body and pass through the centres. It has to come in (*ordinarily*) through the crown of the head (Brahmarandhra) and pass through the inner mind centre which is in the middle of the forehead between the eyebrows. That is why it presses first on the head. The opening of the eyes brings one back to the ordinary consciousness of the outer world, that is why the intensity is relieved by opening the eyes." (CWSA 30: 446)

12.

"Yes, it was the same experience [*as an earlier one*]. You went inside under the pressure of the Force—which is often though not always the first result—went into a few seconds' samadhi according to the ordinary language." (CWSA 30: 446)

13.

"It is possible that there may have been too much haste in this attempt to open the navel and the lower centre. In this Yoga the movement is downward—first the two head centres, then the heart, then the navel and then the two others. If the higher experience is first fully established with its higher consciousness, knowledge and will in the three upper centres, then it is easier to open the three lower ones without too much disturbance." (CWSA 30: 447)

14.

"As for the dynamic descent, you say that the Force has descended to your forehead (inner mind) centre. It seems to be very slow in coming through. It has to come down to the heart centre and below before it can begin to be fully effective. Probably there must be something either in the physical mental (throat) or the emotional vital that obstructs the descent. That may be the reason of the union of the upper Agni and the psychic fire and the push on the psychic centre—something is trying to remove the difficulty." (CWSA 30: 458)

XLI—A Trickle of Spiritual Force Is an Assurance of the Downpour

1.

"If they begin to trickle at first, that is sufficient to justify the faith in a future downpour. You admit that you once or twice felt 'a force coming down and delivering a poem out of me' (your opinion about its worth or worthlessness is not worth a cent, that is for others to pronounce). That is sufficient to blow the rest of your Jeremiad into smithereens; it proves that the force was and is there and at work and it is only your sweating Herculean labour that prevents you feeling it. Also it is the trickle that gives assurance of the possibility of the downpour. One has only to go on and by one's patience deserve the downpour or else, without deserving, stick on till one gets it. In Yoga itself the experience that is a promise and foretaste but gets shut off till the nature is ready for the fulfilment is a phenomenon familiar to every Yogin when he looks back on his past experience. Such were the brief visitations of Ananda you had some time before. It does not matter if you have not a leechlike tenacity—leeches are not the only type of Yogins. If you can stick anyhow or get stuck that is sufficient. The fact that you are not Sri Aurobindo (who said you were?) is an inept irrelevance. One needs only to be oneself in a reasonable way and shake off the hump when it is there or allow it to be shaken off without clinging

to it with a 'leechlike tenacity' worthy of a better cause." (CWSA 29: 184–185)

2.

"What I meant about the experiences was simply this that you have erected your own ideas about what you want from the Yoga and have always been measuring what began to come by that standard and because it was not according to expectation or up to that standard telling yourself after a moment, 'It is nothing, it is nothing.' That dissatisfaction laid you open at every step to a reaction or recoil which prevented any continuous development. The Yogin who has experience knows that the small beginnings are of the greatest importance and have to be cherished and allowed with great patience to develop. He knows for instance that the neutral quiet so dissatisfying to the vital eagerness of the sadhak is the first step towards the peace that passeth allThe Value of Experiences 15 understanding, the small current or thrill of inner delight the first trickling in of the ocean of Ananda, the play of lights or colours the key of the doors of the inner vision and experience, the descents that stiffen the body into a concentrated stillness the first touch of something at the end of which is the presence of the Divine. He is not impatient; he is rather careful not to disturb the evolution that is beginning. Certainly, some sadhaks have strong and decisive experiences at the beginning, but these are followed by a

long labour in which there are many empty periods and many periods of struggle." (CWSA 30: 14–15)

3.

"The descent into the body first in the head, then down to the neck and in the chest is the ordinary rule. For many there is a big stop before it gets below the navel owing to some vital resistance. Once it passes that barricade it does not usually take long to come down farther. But there is no rule as to the time taken. In some it comes down like a flood, in others it goes through with a methodical and deliberate increase." (CWSA 30: 447)

XLII—Small Experiences of Descent Prepare to Break Open the Walls to Big Experiences

1.

"Again you speak of your experiences as vague and dreamlike. In the first place the scorn of small experiences in the inner life is no part of wisdom, reason or common sense. It is in the beginning of the sadhana and for a long time the small experiences that come on each other and, if given their full value, prepare the field, build up a preparatory consciousness and one day break open the walls to big experiences. But if you despise them with the ambitious idea that you must have either the big experiences or nothing, it is not surprising that they come once in a blue moon and cannot do their work. Moreover, all your experiences were not small. There were some like the stilling descent of a Power in the body—what you used to call numbness—which anyone with spiritual knowledge would have recognised as a first strong step towards the opening of the consciousness to the higher Peace and Light. But it was not in the line of your expectations and you gave it no special value. As for vague and dreamlike, you feel it so because you are looking at them and at everything that happens in you from the standpoint of the outward physical mind and intellect which can take only physical things as real and important and vivid and to it inward phenomena are something unreal, vague and

truthless. The spiritual experience does not even despise dreams and visions; it is known to it that many of these things are not dreams at all but experiences on an inner plane and if the experiences of the inner planes which lead to the opening of the inner self into the outer so as to influence and change it are not accepted, the experiences of the subtle consciousness and the trance consciousness, how is the waking consciousness to expand out of the narrow prison of the body and the body-mind and the senses? For, to the physical mind untouched by the inner awakened consciousness, even the experience of the cosmic consciousness or the Eternal Self might very well seem merely subjective and unconvincing." (CWSA 30: 18–19)

XLIII—All the World Is a Play of a Power of the Spiritual Entity

1.

"All the world, according to Science, is nothing but a play of Energy—a material Energy it used to be called, but it is now doubted whether Matter, scientifically speaking, exists except as a phenomenon of Energy. All the world, according to Vedanta, is a play of a power of a spiritual entity, the power of an original consciousness, whether it be Maya or Shakti, and the result an illusion or real. In the world so far as man is concerned we are aware only of mind energy, life energy, energy in matter; but it is supposed that there is a spiritual energy or force also behind them from which they originate. All things, in either case, are the results of a Shakti, energy or force. There is no action without a Force or Energy doing the action and bringing about its consequence. Farther, anything that has no Force in it is either something dead or something unreal or something inert and without consequence. If there is no such thing as spiritual consciousness, there can be no reality of Yoga, and if there is no Yoga force, spiritual force, Yoga Shakti, then also there can be no effectivity in Yoga. A Yoga consciousness or spiritual consciousness which has no power or force in it, may not be dead or unreal but it is evidently something inert and without effect or consequence. Equally a man who sets out to be a Yogi or

Guru and has no spiritual consciousness or no power in his spiritual consciousness—a Yoga force or spiritual force—is making a false claim and is either a charlatan or a self-deluded imbecile; still more is he so if having no spiritual force he claims to have made a path others can follow. If Yoga is a reality, if spirituality is anything better than a delusion, there must be such a thing as Yoga force or spiritual force." (CWSA 29: 179)

2.

"If I write about these questions [*of spiritual force*] from the Yogic point of view, even though on a logical basis, there is bound to be much that is in conflict with your own settled and perhaps cherished opinions, e.g. about 'miracles', persons, the limits of judgment by sense data etc. I have avoided as much as possible writing about these subjects because I would have to propound things that cannot be understood except by reference to other data than those of the physical senses or of reason founded on these alone. I might have to speak of laws and forces not recognised by physical reason or science. In my public writings and my writings to sadhaks I have not dwelt on these because they go out of the range of ordinary knowledge and the understanding founded on it. These things are known to some, but they do not usually speak about it, while the public view of such of them as are known is either credulous or incredulous, but in both cases

without experience or knowledge. So if the views founded on them are likely to upset, shock or bewilder, the better way is silence." (CWSA 29: 186)

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