Through Yoga One Can Come Out Of Suffering

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

Through Yoga One Can Come Out of Suffering

Second Edition

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Vijaybhai's Note on Comprehensive Compilation

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

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

In this regard the Mother has said,

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

On another occasion She said:

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

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

(CWM 16: 309–310)

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

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

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

(CWSA 29: 87)

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

Vijay

Preface

As part of our series of comprehensive compilations, we now bring out a new series of compilations on the topic "Suffering". This book, *Through Yoga One Can Come Out of Suffering,* is the third 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—At Present, Man's Life Is a Suffering Wave Because Man Is Not the Final Being

1.

"Man cannot be final, he is a transitional being. This is very clear from the incompleteness and imperfection of all his powers of consciousness; he can only arrive at some limited form of temporary and unstable perfection by much labour and struggle; and yet the search for perfection is ingrained in his nature. There is something that he is not yet which he has to be; he is reaching always towards the something yet unrealised; his whole life and nature is a preparation, an endeavour of Nature towards what is beyond him.

The human consciousness is limited in every direction; it does not know itself, it does not know the world around it, it does not know the origin and meaning and use of its existence. But it strives always to know, to find the truth of its being, the right use of its life, the end towards which Nature in him is tending; this it does with a seeking and blundering movement; man's consciousness is an ignorance struggling towards knowledge; it is a weakness training itself for power; it is a thing of pleasure and suffering that tries to lay hands on the true delight of existence." (CWSA 12: 265–266)

2.

"Man is a transitional being, he is not final; for in him and high beyond him ascend the radiant degrees which climb to a divine supermanhood.

The step from man towards superman is the next approaching achievement in the earth's evolution. There lies our destiny and the liberating key to our aspiring, but troubled and limited human existence—inevitable because it is at once the intention of the inner Spirit and the logic of Nature's process.

The appearance of a human possibility in a material and animal world was the first glint of a coming divine Light,—the first far-off intimation of a godhead to be born out of Matter. The appearance of the superman in the human world will be the fulfilment of that distant shining promise.

The difference between man and superman will be the difference between mind and a consciousness as far beyond it as thinking mind is beyond the consciousness of plant and animal; the differentiating essence of man is mind, the differentiating essence of superman will be supermind or a divine gnosis.

Man is a mind imprisoned, obscured and circumscribed in a precarious and imperfect living but imperfectly conscious body. The superman will be a supramental spirit which will envelop and freely use a conscious body, plastic to spiritual forces. His physical

frame will be a firm support and an adequate radiant instrument for the spirit's divine play and work in Matter.

Mind, even free and in its own unmixed and unhampered element, is not the highest possibility of consciousness; for mind is not in possession of Truth, but only a minor vessel or an instrument and here an ignorant seeker plucking eagerly at a mass of falsehoods and half-truths for the unsatisfying pabulum of its hunger. …

… The superman will be born, not a magnified mental being, but a supramental power descended here into a new life of the transformed terrestrial body. A gnostic supermanhood is the next distinct and triumphant victory to be won by the spirit descended into earthly nature.

The disk of a secret sun of Power and Joy and Knowledge is emerging out of the material consciousness in which our mind works as a chained slave or a baffled and impotent demiurge; supermind will be the formed body of that radiant effulgence.

…

Man is a being from the mental worlds whose mentality works here involved, obscure and degraded in a physical brain, shut off from its own divinest powers and impotent to change life beyond certain narrow and precarious limits. Even in the highest of his kind it is baulked of its luminous possibilities of supreme force and freedom by this dependence. Most often and in most men it is only a servitor, a purveyor of amusements, a caterer

of needs and interests to the life and the body. But the superman will be a gnostic king of Nature; supermind in him even in its evolutionary beginnings will appear as a ray of the eternal omniscience and omnipotence. Sovereign and irresistible it will lay hands on the mental and physical instruments, and, standing above and yet penetrating and possessing our lower already manifested parts, it will transform mind, life and body into its own divine and luminous nature.

Man in himself is hardly better than an ambitious nothing. He is a narrowness that reaches towards ungrasped widenesses, a littleness straining towards grandeurs which are beyond him, a dwarf enamoured of the heights. His mind is a darkened ray in the splendours of the universal Mind. His life is a striving exulting and suffering wave, an eager passion-tossed and sorrow-stricken or a blindly and dully toiling petty moment of the universal Life. His body is a labouring perishable speck in the material universe. An immortal soul is somewhere hidden within him and gives out from time to time some sparks of its presence, and an eternal spirit is above and overshadows with its wings and upholds with its power this soul continuity in his nature. … The soul and spirit in man seem rather to exist above and behind his formed nature than to be a part of its visible reality; subliminal in his inner being or superconscient above in some unreached status,

they are in his outer consciousness possibilities rather than things realised and present." (CWSA 12: 157–159)

[Gnostic: knowledge, Gnostics believe that salvation by awakening knowledge of the divine, or spiritual]

3.

"Man's greatness is not in what he is but in what he makes possible. His glory is that he is the closed place and secret workshop of a living labour in which supermanhood is made ready by a divine Craftsman.

But he is admitted to a yet greater greatness and it is this that, unlike the lower creation, he is allowed to be partly the conscious artisan of his divine change. His free assent, his consecrated will and participation are needed that into his body may descend the glory that will replace him. His aspiration is earth's call to the supramental Creator.

If earth calls and the Supreme answers, the hour can be can be even now for that immense and glorious transformation." (CWSA 12: 160)

4.

"Man is not final, he is a transitional being.

This imperfect thinker embarrassed by the limitations of his brain and senses, this ignorant mind seeking after the truth of himself and things and never arriving at a

certain knowledge, this stumbling reasoner capable only of speculation and stiff logical conclusions but not of indubitable conclusions or of a complete or direct knowledge, this imperfect liver divided between his reasoning will and his half-governed impulsions and instinctive desires, this thing of bundles of ideas and sensations and lusts and longings, this hunter after forms and formulas, this suffering and sorrowing mixture of wisdom and imbecility [stupidity] we call man is not the final essay of Nature, her last word, the crown of her evolution, the summit of consciousness, her master creation." (CWSA 12: 232–233)

5.

"In the material realm Nature starts with an entire insensibility, and it is a notable fact that either a comparative insensibility or a deficient sensibility or, more often, a greater endurance and hardness to suffering is found in the beginnings of life, in the animal, in primitive or less developed man; as the human being grows in evolution, he grows in sensibility and suffers more keenly in mind and life and body. For the growth in consciousness is not sufficiently supported by a growth in force; the body becomes more subtle, more finely capable, but less solidly efficient in its external energy: man has to call in his will, his mental power to dynamise, correct and control his nervous being, force it to the strenuous tasks he demands

from his instruments, steel it against suffering and disaster. In the spiritual ascent this power of the consciousness and its will over the instruments, the control of spirit and inner mind over the outer mentality and the nervous being and the body, increases immensely; a tranquil and wide equality of the spirit to all shocks and contacts comes in and becomes the habitual poise, and this can pass from the mind to the vital parts and establish there too an immense and enduring largeness of strength and peace; even in the body this state may form itself and meet inwardly the shocks of grief and pain and all kinds of suffering." (CWSA 22: 1024)

6.

"Sri Aurobindo tells us that man is a transitional being and that from all the sufferings of the world will emerge a being of light capable of manifesting the Divine.

Thus, all those who are not satisfied with the world as it is, know that their aspiration does not rise in vain and that the world is changing.

If consecration and effort are associated with the aspiration, things will move faster." (CWM 10: 297)

II—The World Is in a State of Suffering and Misery Because It Is Not Conscious of the Divine

1.

"If you are happy to be unhappy, that's all right, it is your own affair; if you are content to be unhappy and to suffer and remain in the ignorance and inconscience you are in, stay there. But if this does not satisfy you, if you want to be conscious and you want suffering to cease, then you must make constant efforts to become conscious of the sacrifice [self-giving] and to make your sacrifice consciously instead of unconsciously.

Everything turns around the consciousness, the fact of being or not being conscious. And it is only in the supreme Consciousness that you can attain the perfect expression of yourself.

But that the Oneness exists, even if you feel just the opposite, is a fact you can do nothing about, for it is a divine action and a divine fact—it is a divine action and a divine fact. If you are conscious of the Divine, you become conscious of this fact. If you are not conscious of the Divine, the fact exists but you simply are not conscious of it—that's all.

So, everything turns around a phenomenon of consciousness. And the world is in a state of obscurity, suffering, misery, of... everything, all it is, simply because it is not conscious of the Divine, because it has cut off the

connection in its consciousness, because its consciousness is separated from the Divine. That is to say, it has become unconscious." (CWM 8: 76–77)

III—Philanthropy to Remove Suffering Is Like Cutting Branches from the Tree of Suffering, and They Grow Again

1.

"But even charity and altruism are often essentially egoistic in their immediate motive. They are stirred by the discomfort of the sight of suffering to the nervous system or by the pleasurableness of others' appreciation of our kindliness or by the egoistic self-appreciation of our own benevolence or by the need of indulgence in sympathy. There are philanthropists who would be troubled if the poor were not always with us, for they would then have no field for their charity.

We begin to enter into the universal consciousness when, apart from all individual motive and necessity, by the mere fact of unity of our being with all others, their joy becomes our joy, their suffering our suffering. But we must not mistake this for the highest condition. After a time we are no longer overcome by any suffering, our own or others', but are merely touched and respond in helpfulness. And there is yet another state in which the subjection to suffering is impossible to us because we live in the Beatitude, but this does not deter us from love and beneficence,—any more than it is necessary for a mother to weep or be overcome by the little childish griefs and

troubles of her children in order to love, understand and soothe.

Nor is detailed sympathy and alleviation of particular sufferings the only help that can be given to men. To cut down branches of a man's tree of suffering is good, but they grow again; to aid him to remove its roots is a still more divine helpfulness. The gift of joy, peace or perfection is a greater giving than the effusion of an individual benevolence and sympathy and it is the most royal outcome of unity with others in the universal consciousness." (CWM 13: 454–455)

IV—A New Consciousness Manifesting on Earth Can Raise Humanity Out of Suffering and Misery

1.

"Indeed, true happiness is the happiness one can feel in any circumstances whatsoever, because it comes from regions which cannot be affected by any external circumstances. But this happiness is accessible only to a very few individuals, and most of the human race is still subject to terrestrial conditions. So we can say on one hand that a change in the human consciousness is absolutely indispensable and, on the other, that without an integral transformation of the terrestrial atmosphere, the conditions of human life cannot be effectively changed. In either case, the remedy is the same: a new consciousness must manifest on earth and in man. Only the appearance of a new force and light and power accompanying the descent of the supramental consciousness into this world can raise man out of the anguish and pain and misery in which he is submerged. For only the supramental consciousness bringing down upon earth a higher poise and a purer and truer light can achieve the great miracle of transformation." (CWM 12: 97–98)

2.

"Nature is striving towards this new manifestation. But her ways are tortuous and her march is uncertain, full of halts and regressions, so much so that it is difficult to perceive

her true plan. However, it is becoming more and more clear that she wants to bring forth a new species out of the human species, a supramental race that will be to man what man is to the animal. But the advent of this transformation, this creation of a new race which Nature would take centuries of groping attempts to bring about, can be effected by the intelligent will of man, not only in a much shorter time but also with much less waste and loss. " (CWM 12: 98)

3.

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

4.

"The integral Yoga is not an escape from the physical world which leaves it irrevocably to its fate, nor is it an acceptance of material life as it is without any hope of decisive change, or of the world as the final expression of the Divine Will." (CWM 12: 98)

5.

"The integral Yoga aims at scaling all the degrees of consciousness from the ordinary mental consciousness to a supramental and divine consciousness, and when the

ascent is completed, to return to the material world and infuse it with the supramental force and consciousness that have been won, so that this earth may be gradually transformed into a supramental and divine world.

The integral Yoga is especially intended for those who have realised in themselves all that man can realise and yet are not satisfied, for they demand from life what it cannot give. Those who yearn for the unknown and aspire for perfection, who ask themselves agonising questions and have not found any definitive answers to them, they are the ones who are ready for the integral Yoga." (CWM 12: 98–99)

V—The Two Finest Human Souls Who Tried to Remedy Suffering: One through True Philanthropy and the Other through Escape

1. Buddha and Saint Vincent de Paul believed in salvation through the Absolute, which one called Nirvana and the other called God

"First of all, I want to tell you about two striking examples chosen from among the adepts of true philanthropy.

Two outstanding beings at the two extremes of thought and action, two of the finest human souls expressing themselves in sensitive and compassionate hearts, received the same psychic shock when they came into contact with the misery of men. Both devoted their whole lives to finding the remedy for the suffering of their fellow-men, and both believed they had found it. But because their solutions, which may be described as contraries, were each in its own domain incomplete and partial, both of them failed to relieve the suffering of humanity.

One in the East, Prince Siddhartha, later known as the Buddha, and the other in the West, Monsieur Vincent, who came to be called Saint Vincent de Paul after his death, stood, so to say, at the two poles of human consciousness, and their methods of assistance were diametrically opposite. Yet both believed in salvation

through the spirit, through the Absolute, unknowable to thought, which one called God and the other Nirvana." (CWM 12: 95)

2. Saint Vincent de Paul's philanthropy is only a palliative, not a cure

"Vincent de Paul had an ardent faith and preached to his flock that one must save one's soul. But on coming into contact with human misery, he soon discovered that in order to find one's soul one must have time to look for it. And when do those who labour from morning till night and often from night till morning to eke out a living really have time to think of their souls? So in the simplicity of his charitable heart he concluded that if the poor were at least assured of the barest necessities by those who possess more than they need, these unfortunate people would have enough leisure to lead a better life. He believed in the virtue and efficacy of social work, of active and material charity. He believed that misery could be cured by the multiplication of individual cures, by bringing relief to a greater number, to a very large number of individuals. But this is only a palliative, not a cure. The fullness of consecration, self-abnegation and courage with which he carried on his work has made of him one of the most beautiful and touching figures in human history. And yet his endeavour seems to have rather multiplied than

diminished the number of the destitute and the helpless. Certainly the most positive result of his apostleship was to create an appreciable sense of charity in the mentality of a certain section of the well to-do. And because of this, the work was truly more useful to those who were giving charity than to those who were the object of this charity." (CWM 12: 95–96)

3. The number of individuals capable of attaining Buddha's Nirvana has been very small

"At the other extreme of consciousness stands the Buddha with his pure and sublime compassion. For him the suffering arising out of life could only be abolished by the abolition of life; for life and the world are the outcome of the desire to be, the fruit of ignorance. Abolish desire, eliminate ignorance, and the world will disappear and with it all suffering and misery. In a great effort of spiritual aspiration and silent concentration he elaborated his discipline, one of the most uplifting and the most effective disciplines ever given to those who are eager for liberation.

Millions have believed in his doctrine, although the number of individuals capable of putting it into practice has been very small. But the condition of the earth has remained practically the same and there has been no appreciable diminution in the mass of human suffering." (CWM 12: 96–97)

4. Help is not the same as a cure, nor is escaping the same as conquering

"However, men have canonised [sanctified] the first and deified [made holy] the second in their attempt to express their gratitude and admiration. But very few have sincerely tried to put into practice the lesson and example that were given to them, although that is truly the only effective way of showing one's gratitude. And yet, even if that had been done, the conditions of human life would not have been perceptibly improved. For to help is not the same as to cure, nor is escaping the same as conquering. Indeed, to alleviate physical hardships, the solution proposed by Vincent de Paul can in no way be enough to cure humanity of its misery and suffering, for not all human sufferings come from physical destitution and can be cured by material means—far from it. Bodily wellbeing does not inevitably bring peace and joy; and poverty is not necessarily a cause of misery, as is shown by the voluntary poverty of the ascetics of all countries and all ages, who found in their destitution the source and condition of a perfect peace and happiness. Whereas on the contrary, the enjoyment of worldly possessions, of all that material wealth can provide in the way of comfort and pleasure and external satisfaction is powerless to prevent one who possesses these things from suffering pain and sorrow.

Neither can the other solution, escape, the solution of the Buddha, present a practical remedy to the problem. For even if we suppose that a very large number of individuals are capable of practising the discipline and achieving the final liberation, this can in no way abolish suffering from earth and cure others of it, all the others who are still incapable of following the path that leads to Nirvana." (CWM 12: 97)

VI—Pain and Suffering Are Imposed by the Darkness of Human Nature and Are Not Inevitable on the Path

1.

"I know perfectly well that pain and suffering and struggle and excesses of despair are natural—though not inevitable—on the way,—not because they are helps, but because they are imposed on us by the darkness of this human nature out of which we have to struggle into the Light. I do not suppose Ramakrishna or Vivekananda would have recommended the incidents you allude to as an example for others to follow— they would surely have said that faith, fortitude, perseverance were the better way. That after all was what they stuck to in the end in spite of these bad moments and they would never have dreamed of giving up the Yoga or the aspiration for the Divine on the ground that they were unfit and not meant for the realisation." (CWSA 29: 470)

2.

"It has been so far heard that as a result of daily and terrible struggles for years those who put an entire and sincere confidence in her are able to follow the sunlit path and even those who cannot, yet when they do put the trust find their path suddenly easy and, if it becomes difficult again, it is only when distrust, revolt, abhiman, or other

darknesses come upon them. The sunlit path is not altogether a fable.

But you will ask what of those who cannot? …

The dark path is there and there are many who make like the Christians a gospel of spiritual suffering; many hold it to be the unavoidable price of victory. It may be so under certain circumstances, as it has been in so many lives at least at the beginning, or one may choose to make it so. But then the price has to be paid with resignation, fortitude or a tenacious resilience. I admit that if borne in that way the attacks of the Dark Forces or the ordeals they impose have a meaning. After each victory gained over them, there is then a sensible advance; often they seem to show us the difficulties in ourselves which we have to overcome and to say, 'Here you must conquer us and here.' But all the same it is a too dark and difficult way which nobody should follow on whom the necessity does not lie." (CWSA 29: 472)

VII—For the Soul in Its Ascendance, Grief and Suffering Are Incidents on the Way

1.

"For the life in its progress, for the soul in its ascendance, grief and suffering should be only an incident on the way and the vision look always and steadily to a joy and a glory beyond it—let the gloom pass and look beyond it towards Light." (CWSA 31: 196)

2.

"The sufferings and distress which come to people are part of their karma, part of the experience the being has to go through on its way through life after life till it is ready for spiritual change. In the life of the sadhak all vicissitudes are part of the path and, if he is a sadhak, he will recognise them as such though he may not understand their full meaning till afterwards—good and bad fortune, outward happiness and suffering are to be taken with an unshaken equality and trust in the Divine Wisdom till one has attained a position in which, united with the Divine Will, one can dominate them." (CWSA 31: 670)

VIII—Higher Parts of the Vital and Mental Being Aspire for the Divine and Suffer When Far from Him

"*The vital being seeks only power—material possession and terrestrial power.*

This also is false. The higher part of the vital being, like the higher part of the mental being, aspires for the Divine and suffers when far from Him." (CWM 16: 192)

IX—In Yoga, People Suffer Because of a Lack of Sincerity

1.

"*Mother, is there really any suffering in our yoga? When people suffer, are they suffering because of the difficulties?*

No. Usually they suffer because of a lack of sincerity.

"*Perhaps they are seeking satisfaction through suffering!*

Yes, that also happens.

I think that all suffering in this yoga is imaginary.

Yes.

Who suffers? The vital? Is it because its desires are not satisfied?

Most often—but it also manages to suffer when its desires are satisfied.

If we understand the cause of suffering, there is no suffering any more.

That is true.

We suffer through our own stupidity.

Usually it is so." (CWM 17: 147)

2.

"*Sweet Mother, if it is possible, pull me out of this darkness and suffering. If it is not possible, please let me feel Your living Presence within me and I shall endure any suffering.*

As soon as you start feeling bad, you should try to repeat this: 'Lord, give me the strength to think only of You'." (CWM 17: 350)

X—Recognize Your Nature's Difficulties and Remove Them; Otherwise, Face Suffering in the Initial Stages of the Sadhana

1.

"If you are ready from the beginning to recognise the difficulties in your own nature, they can be easily removed; otherwise you will have to face much internal trouble and suffering in the first stages of the sadhana." [Part of the letter written to Durgadas dated May 12. 1921] (CWSA 36: 407–408)

XI—In Yoga, When There Is a Foundation in the True Consciousness, Grief Is Impossible

1.

"The ordinary life naturally has its mental, vital and physical pleasures, but it is of a superficial character and there is no firm foundation of the consciousness anywhere—all is at the mercy of the play of forces. In Yoga there is the period of struggle and difficulty in which the difficulty and suffering can be acute and the period of the foundation in the true consciousness after which there is no serious disturbance of the peace and freedom leading to the state of realisation in all the being in which grief etc. are impossible." (CWSA 31: 625)

XII—Difficulties and Sufferings of the Spiritual Path Are Not Real

1.

"*Sweet Mother,*

Why has the Divine made His path so difficult? He can make it easier if He wants, can't He?

First of all, one should know that the intellect, the mind, can understand nothing of the Divine, neither *what* He does nor *how* He does it and still less *why* He does it. To know something of the Divine, one has to rise above thought and enter into the psychic consciousness, the consciousness of the soul, or into the spiritual consciousness.

Those who have had the experience have always said that the difficulties and sufferings of the path are not real, but a creation of human ignorance, and that as soon as one gets out of this ignorance one also gets out of the difficulties, to say nothing of the inalienable state of bliss in which one dwells as soon as one is in conscious contact with the Divine.

So according to them, the question has no real basis and cannot be posed." (CWM 16: 225)

XIII—Suffering Means That You Are Not Born into the Spirit

1.

"In the individual existence, that is what makes all the difference; so long as one just speaks of the spirit and it is something one has read about, whose existence one vaguely knows about, but not a very concrete reality for the consciousness, this means that one is not born into the spirit. And when one is born into the spirit, it becomes something much more concrete, much more living, much more real, much more tangible than the whole material world. And this is what makes the essential difference between beings. When *that* becomes spontaneously real—the true, concrete existence, the atmosphere one can freely breathe—then one knows one has crossed over to the other side. But so long as it is something rather vague and hazy—you have heard about it, you know that it exists, but... it has no concrete reality—well, this means that the new birth has not yet taken place. As long as you tell yourself, 'Yes, this I can see, this I can touch, the pain I suffer from, the hunger that torments me, the sleep that makes me feel heavy, this is real, this is concrete...' (*Mother laughs*), that means that you have not yet crossed over to the other side, you are not born into the spirit." (CWM 9: 430)

2.

"In fact, the vast majority of men are like prisoners with all the doors and windows closed, so they suffocate, which is quite natural. But they have with them the key that opens the doors and windows, and they do not use it.... Certainly there is a time when they don't know they have the key, but long after they have come to know it, long after they have been told about it, they hesitate to use it and doubt whether it has the power to open the doors and windows or even that it is a good thing to open them! And even when they feel that 'after all, it might be good', there remains some fear: 'What will happen when these doors and windows are opened?...' and they are afraid. They are afraid of being lost in that light and freedom. They want to remain what they call 'themselves'. They like their falsehood and their bondage. Something in them likes it and goes on clinging to it. They still have the impression that without their limits they would no longer exist.

That is why the journey is so long, that is why it is difficult. For if one truly consented to cease to exist, everything would become so easy, so swift, so luminous, so joyful—but perhaps not in the way men understand joy and ease. In truth, there are very few people who do not enjoy fighting. There are very few who could accept the absence of night, few can conceive of light except as the opposite of darkness: 'Without shadows there would be no picture. Without struggle, there would be no victory.

Without suffering there would be no joy.' That is what they think, and so long as one thinks in this way, one is not yet born into the spirit." (CWM 9: 430–431)

XIV—Our Gate of Deliverance from Suffering Is to Find the Divine Within Us

1.

"For it is not, as some religions suppose, a supra-cosmic, arbitrary, personal Deity himself altogether uninvolved in the fall who has imposed evil and suffering on creatures made capriciously by his fiat. The Divine we know is an Infinite Being in whose infinite manifestation these things have come—it is the Divine itself that is here, behind us, pervading the manifestation, supporting the world with its oneness; it is the Divine that is in us upholding itself the burden of the fall and its dark consequence. If above it stands for ever in its perfect Light, Bliss and Peace, it is also here; its Light, Bliss and Peace are secretly here supporting all; in ourselves there is a spirit, a central presence greater than the series of surface personalities which, like the supreme Divine itself, is not overborne by the fate they endure. If we find out this Divine within us, if we know ourselves as this spirit which is of one essence and being with the Divine, that is our gate of deliverance and in it we can remain ourselves even in the midst of this world's disharmonies, luminous, blissful and free. That much is the age-old testimony of spiritual experience." (CWSA 28: 256–257)

2.

"It is an evolution out of material inconscience to consciousness and on towards the divine Consciousness, from ignorance to divine Knowledge, from darkness through half-lights to Light, from death to Immortality, from suffering to the Divine Bliss. Suffering is due first to the Ignorance, secondly to the separation of the individual consciousness from the Divine Consciousness and Being, a separation created by the Ignorance—when that ceases, when one lives completely in the Divine and no more in one's separated smaller self, then only suffering can altogether cease. Each soul follows its own line and these lines meet, journey together for a space, then part to meet again perhaps hereafter—often they meet to help each other on the journey in one way or another." (CWSA 28: 527)

3.

"… the imperfection, the evil, the suffering may be a besetting circumstance or a dolorous [*painful*] passage, but not the very condition of manifestation, not the very essence of birth in Nature. And if so, the highest wisdom will lie not in escape, but in the urge towards a victory here, in a consenting association with the Will behind the world, in a discovery of the spiritual gate to perfection which will be at the same time an opening for the entire descent of

the Divine Light, Knowledge, Power, Beatitude." (CWSA 28: 253)

4.

"But there is also this other and indubitable experience that the Divine is here in everything as well as above and behind everything, that all is in That and is That when we go back from its appearance to its Reality. It is a significant and illumining fact that the knower of Brahman even moving and acting in this world, even bearing all its shocks, can live in some absolute peace, light and beatitude of the Divine. … This spiritual possibility points beyond itself and brings a ray of hope into the darkness of our fallen existence." (CWSA 28: 254)

5.

"This evolution, this spiritual progression—does it stop short here in the imperfect mental being called Man? … There is at least the possibility, there comes at a certain point the certitude that there is a far greater consciousness than what we call Mind, and that by ascending the ladder still farther we can find a point at which the hold of the material Inconscience, the vital and mental Ignorance ceases; a principle of consciousness becomes capable of manifestation which liberates not partially, not imperfectly, but radically and wholly this imprisoned Divine. In this vision each stage of evolution appears as due to the

descent of a higher and higher Power of consciousness, raising the terrestrial level, creating a new stratum, but the highest yet remain to descend and it is by their descent that the riddle of terrestrial existence will receive its solution and not only the soul but Nature herself find her deliverance. This is the Truth which has been seen in flashes, in more and more entirety of its terms by the line of seers whom the Tantra would call the hero-seekers and the divine seekers and which may now be nearing the point of readiness for its full revelation and experience. Then whatever be the heavy weight of strife and suffering and darkness in the world, yet if there is this as its high result awaiting us, all that has gone before may not be counted too great a price by the strong and adventurous for the glory that is to come. At any rate the shadow lifts; there is a Divine Light that leans over the world and is not only a far-off incommunicable Lustre." (CWSA 28: 255)

6.

"Emotion is a good element in Yoga; but emotional *desire* becomes easily a cause of perturbation and an obstacle. Turn your emotions towards the Divine, aspire for their purification; they will then become a help on the way and no longer a cause of suffering. Not to kill emotion, but to turn it towards the Divine is the right way of the Yoga." (CWSA 29: 350)

7.

"It happens so in the sadhak's own subjective consciousness [*that the Divine is seen everywhere and there is no sorrow or suffering in the world*]. Of course it does not mean that the whole world becomes like that in everybody's consciousness.

If your experience were objective, then that would mean that the whole world had changed, everybody became conscious, no sorrow or suffering anywhere. Needless to say, the material world has not changed objectively in that way. Only in your own consciousness, subjectively, you see the Divine everywhere, all disharmony disappears, sorrow and suffering become impossible for the time at least—that is a subjective experience." (CWSA 30: 21–22)

8.

"Having realised infinite unity in ourselves, then to give ourselves to the world is utter freedom and absolute empire.

Infinite, we are free from death; for life then becomes a play of our immortal existence. We are free from weakness; for we are the whole sea enjoying the myriad shock of its waves. We are free from grief and pain; for we learn how to harmonise our being with all that touches it and to find in all things action and reaction of the delight of existence. We are free from limitation; for

the body becomes a plaything of the infinite mind and learns to obey the will of the immortal soul. We are free from the fever of the nervous mind and the heart, yet are not bound to immobility." (CWSA 13: 206)

9.

"The experience you have is the experience of the true self. Untouched by grief and joy, desire, anxiety or trouble, vast and calm and full of peace, it observes the agitations of the outer being as one might the play of children. It is indeed the divine element in you. The more you can live in that, the firmer will be the foundation of the sadhana. In this self will come all the higher experiences, oneness with the Divine, light, knowledge, strength, Ananda, the play of the Mother's higher forces. It does not always become stable from the first, though for some it does; but the experience comes more and more frequently and lasts till it is no longer covered by the ordinary nature." (CWSA 30: 394)

10.

"For how could he know anything of the origin until he becomes conscious of this origin in himself?

It is by understanding himself, by learning to know himself, that he can make the supreme discovery and cry out in wonder like the patriarch in the Bible, 'The house of God is here and I knew it not.'

That is why we must express that sublime thought, creatrix of the material worlds, and make known to all the word that fills the heavens and the earth, 'I am in all things and all beings.'

When all shall know this, the promised day of great transfigurations will be at hand. When in each atom of Matter men shall recognise the indwelling thought of God, when in each living creature they shall perceive some hint of a gesture of God, when each man can see God in his brother, then dawn will break, dispelling the darkness, the falsehood, the ignorance, the error and suffering that weigh upon all Nature. For, 'all Nature suffers and laments as she awaits the revelation of the Sons of God.'

This indeed is the central thought epitomising all others, the thought which should be ever present to our remembrance as the sun that illumines all life." (CWM 2: 40–41)

11.

"For those who want to live according to Truth, the only way is to become conscious of the Divine Presence and to live exclusively according to Its Will.

This is the only way to escape from evil and suffering, the only way to be always in peace, light and joy. (CWM 10: 275)

12.

"When one comes out of this consciousness and enters into the Truth-consciousness; the difference is such that one wonders how there can be anything like suffering and misery and death and all that. There is a kind of astonishment in the sense that one does not understand how it can happen—when one has really tipped over to the other side." (CWM 10: 108)

13.

"There is only one solution, it is the direct contact of the physical with the Supreme. That is the only thing.

There you are.

But the cells of the body... (I do not know if it is particular to this body, I cannot believe that this body is so exceptional), but they are *absolutely* convinced, and they try, they try, they try all the while, all the while, all the while, with every misery, with every difficulty, with every... there is only one solution—only one thing: 'Thou, Thou alone, to Thee alone—Thou alone existest. It is this which is translated in the consciousness of people like the Buddhists and others, as world-illusion, but it is only a half-translation.

But the true solution is this: 'Thou alone existest, Thou alone.' All the rest... all the rest is misery: misery, suffering... obscurity.

Perhaps—perhaps it is... Evidently in the conception of Sri Aurobindo, the Supramental escapes from all this misery.

There is only That. Otherwise, it is difficult.

Perhaps the half-measures now no longer suffice... I do not know. Perhaps it is time to take one's stand definitely.

As for this body, it has taken its stand. But I felt... one must be very, very enduring—very enduring—so I did not urge others to do it, but all that amounts to saying that perhaps it is time. I do not know." (CWM 11: 173)

14.

"Can there be any greater misfortune than to live without knowing the Supreme Lord? And yet this almost universal ill rarely excites any pity. Because one who knows that he is suffering from it also knows that the cure depends on him alone—for the Lord's compassion is infinite." (CWM 10: 358)

XV—Through Yoga, One Can Come Out of Suffering

1.

"If human life is imperfect, it is because its consciousness moves seeking, groping, experimenting in a fundamental ignorance of the real truth of its own being and is therefore unable to know or to effectuate the true law of its life. It is only if man can overcome this ignorance and inability that he can hope to perfect his life and nature. If there is no means of doing that, then he can never hope to escape from his imperfection and the suffering which is its consequence. He can only either die in his ignorance escaping from an incurable imperfection and suffering by a physical extinction or escape out of it by a spiritual extinction gained through an awakening of the soul to the illusoriness of birth and world and Nature or [. . .] & hope to get [out] of it into some other supraterrestrial state of existence. Human life on earth can then never grow into anything fundamentally other, better or more perfect than it is now. The hope that by using our reason and observing or utilising the laws of Nature we can arrive at a perfect life here is futile, for our nature here being itself ignorant and imperfect cannot arrive at anything better than a mitigated imperfection and ignorance. But if there is a means by which we can arrive at a true knowledge of the reality behind things and enter into its Truth and Light and Power then there is no reason why our life here should not

become divine and perfect. It is through Yoga that this means can be found and this emergence become possible." (CWSA 12: 177– 178)

2.

"All Yoga has one supreme object; a permanent liberation from the ignorance and weakness of this limited and suffering human and earthly consciousness is its purpose and either an escape or a growth and swift flowering into a greater consciousness beyond mind, life and body, into a wider and diviner existence." (CWSA 12: 363)

3.

"Man, therefore, has first of all to become ethical, *sukṛtī,* and then to rise to heights beyond any mere ethical rule of living, to the light, largeness and power of the spiritual nature, where he gets beyond the grasp of the dualities and its delusion, *dvandva-moha*. There he no longer seeks his personal good or pleasure or shuns his personal suffering or pain, for by these things he is no longer affected, nor says any longer, 'I am virtuous,' 'I am sinful,' but acts in his own high spiritual nature by the will of the Divine for the universal good. We have already seen that for this end self-knowledge, equality, impersonality are the first necessities, and that that is the way of reconciliation between knowledge and works, between spirituality and activity in the world, between the ever immobile quietism

of the timeless self and the eternal play of the pragmatic energy of Nature." (CWSA 19: 281)

4.

"The Supreme who becomes all creation, yet infinitely transcends it, is not a will-less cause aloof from his creation. …

He is not an aloof and indifferent Witness who waits impassively for all to abolish itself or return to its unmoved original principle. He is the mighty lord of the worlds and peoples, *loka-maheśvara*, and governs all not only from within but from above, from his supreme transcendence. … Unaffected by its oppositions, unbound by his creation, exceeding, yet intimately related to this Nature and closely one with her creatures, their Spirit, Self, highest Soul, Lord, Lover, Friend, Refuge, he is ever leading them from within them and from above through the mortal appearances of ignorance and suffering and sin and evil, ever leading each through his nature and all through universal Nature towards a supreme light and bliss and immortality and transcendence. This is the fullness of the liberating knowledge.

He is intimately present within every creature and the cause, ruler, director of all cosmic happenings and yet is he far too great, mighty and infinite to be limited by his creation." (CWSA 19: 350–351)

5.

"There is a highest spiritual experience and foundation above the immutability of the Brahman, there is an eternal dharma greater than the rajasic impulsion to works, *pravṛtti,* there is an absolute delight which is untouched by rajasic suffering and beyond the sattwic happiness, and these things are found and possessed by dwelling in the being and power of the Purushottama. But since it is acquired by bhakti, its status must be that divine delight, Ananda, in which is experienced the union of utter love and possessing oneness, the crown of bhakti. And to rise into that Ananda, into that imperishable oneness must be the completion of spiritual perfection and the fulfilment of the eternal immortalising dharma." (CWSA 19: 434)

6.

"Then, free from reactions, the senses will be delivered from the affections of liking and disliking, escape the duality of positive and negative desire, and calm, peace, clearness, happy tranquillity, *ātmaprasāda*, will settle upon the man. That clear tranquillity is the source of the soul's felicity; all grief begins to lose its power of touching the tranquil soul; the intelligence is rapidly established in the peace of the self; suffering is destroyed. It is this calm, desireless, griefless fixity of the buddhi in selfpoise and self-knowledge to which the Gita gives the name of Samadhi." (CWSA 19: 101)

7.

"… the Gita distinguishes between four kinds of *bhaktas*. There are those who turn to him as a refuge from sorrow and suffering in the world, *ārta.* There are those who seek him as the giver of good in the world, *arthārthī*. There are those who come to him in the desire for knowledge, *jijñāsu*. And lastly there are those who adore him with knowledge, *jñānī*. All are approved by the Gita, but only on the last does it lay the seal of its complete sanction. (CWSA 19: 284)

8.

"The bhakta of the Purushottama is one who has a universal heart and mind which has broken down all the narrow walls of the ego. A universal love dwells in his heart, a universal compassion flows from it like an encompassing sea. He will have friendship and pity for all beings and hate for no living thing: for he is patient, long suffering, enduring, a well of forgiveness. A desireless content is his, a tranquil equality to pleasure and pain, suffering and happiness, the steadfast control of self and the firm unshakable will and resolution of the Yogin and a love and devotion which gives up the whole mind and reason to the Lord, to the Master of his consciousness and knowledge. Or, simply, he will be one who is freed from the troubled agitated lower nature and from its waves of joy and fear and anxiety and resentment and desire, a

spirit of calm by whom the world is not afflicted or troubled, nor is he afflicted or troubled by the world, a soul of peace with whom all are at peace." (CWSA 19: 404)

9.

"If mankind only caught a glimpse of what infinite enjoyments, what perfect forces, what luminous reaches of spontaneous knowledge, what wide calms of our being lie waiting for us in the tracts which our animal evolution has not yet conquered, they would leave all and never rest till they had gained these treasures. … [Thoughts and Aphorisms]

…

But if you had a total vision, however brief, you would not be able to resist the temptation of making the effort needed to realise it. …

…

This is what happens when one sees things from a great height, from a great distance, when one's view is vast, almost infinite. Everything that upsets human beings and makes them suffer, disappears; so those who are very wise, who have abandoned life for the sake of higher wisdom tell you with a smile, 'Why suffer? Come out of it and you will suffer no more'." (CWM 10: 10–13)

XVI—In Spiritual Life, One Can Overcome the Grief of Ordinary Life

1.

"I may say briefly that there are two states of consciousness in either of which one can live. One is a higher consciousness which stands above the play of life and governs it; this is variously called the Self, the Spirit or the Divine. The other is the normal consciousness in which men live; it is something quite superficial, an instrument of the Spirit for the play of life. Those who live and act in the normal consciousness are governed entirely by the common movements of the mind and are naturally subject to grief and joy and anxiety and desire or to everything else that makes up the ordinary stuff of life. Mental quiet and happiness they can get, but it can never be permanent or secure. But the spiritual consciousness is all light, peace, power and bliss. If one can live entirely in it, there is no question; these things become naturally and securely his. But even if he can live partly in it or keep himself constantly open to it, he receives enough of this spiritual light and peace and strength and happiness to carry him securely through all the shocks of life. What one gains by opening to this spiritual consciousness, depends on what one seeks from it; if it is peace, one gets peace; if it is light or knowledge, one lives in a great light and receives a knowledge deeper and truer than any the normal mind of

man can acquire; if it [is] strength or power, one gets a spiritual strength for the inner life or Yogic power to govern the outer work and action; if it is happiness, one enters into a beatitude far greater than any joy or happiness that the ordinary human life can give." (CWSA 36: 440–441)

XVII—In Spiritual Peace, All Suffering Ceases in All Its Forms

1.

"There was a time, not so long ago, when the spiritual aspiration of man was turned towards a silent, inactive peace, detached from all worldly things, a flight from life, precisely to avoid battle, to rise above the struggle, escape all effort; it was a spiritual peace in which, along with the cessation of all tension, struggle, effort, there ceased also suffering in all its forms, and this was considered to be the true and only expression of a spiritual and divine life. It was considered to be the divine grace, the divine help, the divine intervention. And even now, in this age of anguish, tension, hypertension, this sovereign peace is the best received aid of all, the most welcome, the solace people ask and hope for. For many it is still the true sign of a divine intervention, of divine grace." (CWM 9: 298)

XVIII—Divine Love Is Victorious Over All Suffering

1.

"Surely there is no longer any Thou or I or any separate universe; only an immense harmony is there, sublime and infinite, which is all things and of which all things will one day grow aware. It is the harmony of boundless Love, Love victorious over all suffering and all obscurity.

By this law of Love, Thy law, I want to live more and more integrally; to it unreservedly I give myself. And all my being exults in an inexpressible Peace." (CWM 1: 25) [From Prayers and Meditations, July 23, 1913]

2.

"How sorrowful and miserable seems to me their life of ignorance and obscurity, their life of mad agitation and unprofitable dispersion!—when one single spark of Thy sublime light, one single drop of Thy divine love, can transform this suffering into an ocean of delight!

O Lord, my prayer soars towards Thee: May they know at last Thy peace and that calm and irresistible strength which comes of an immutable serenity—the privilege of those whose eyes have been opened and who are able to contemplate Thee in the flaming core of their being." (CWM 1: 38) [From Prayers and Meditations, November 29, 1913]

3.

"Love is the power and passion of the divine self-delight and without love we may get the rapt peace of its infinity, the absorbed silence of the Ananda, but not its absolute depth of richness and fullness. Love leads us from the suffering of division into the bliss of perfect union, but without losing that joy of the act of union which is the soul's greatest discovery and for which the life of the cosmos is a long preparation. Therefore to approach God by love is to prepare oneself for the greatest possible spiritual fulfilment." (CWSA 24: 547)

4.

"This is the attitude of true, conscious and discerning love, the love which knows how to see behind appearances, understand in spite of words, and which, amid all obstacles, is in constant communion with the depths.

What value have our impulses and our desires, our anguish and our violence, our sufferings and our struggles, all these inner vicissitudes unduly dramatised by our unruly imagination—what value do they have before this great, this sublime and divine love bending over us from the innermost depths of our being, bearing with our weaknesses, rectifying our errors, healing our wounds, bathing our whole being with its regenerating streams?" (CWM 2: 42)

5.

"So too in all happenings we have to come to see the dealings with us of the divine Lover and take such pleasure in them that even grief and suffering and physical pain become his gifts and turn to delight and disappear finally into delight, slain by the sense of the divine contact, because the touch of his hands is the alchemist of a miraculous transformation. Some reject life because it is tainted with grief and pain, but to the God-lover grief and pain become means of meeting with him, imprints of his pressure and finally cease as soon as our union with his nature becomes too complete for these masks of the universal delight at all to conceal it. They change into the Ananda." (CWSA 24: 602)

6.

"The relations which arise out of this attitude towards the Divine, are that of the divine Father and the Mother with the child and that of the divine Friend. To the Divine as these things the human soul comes for help, for protection, for guidance, for fruition,—or if knowledge be the aim, to the Guide, Teacher, Giver of light, for the Divine is the Sun of knowledge,—or it comes in pain and suffering for relief and solace and deliverance, it may be deliverance either from the suffering itself or from the world-existence which is the habitat of the suffering or from all its inner and real causes. In these things we find there is a certain gradation. For the relation of fatherhood is always less close, intense,

passionate, intimate, and therefore it is less resorted to in the Yoga which seeks for the closest union. That of the divine Friend is a thing sweeter and more intimate, admits of an equality and intimacy even in inequality and the beginning of mutual self-giving; at its closest when all idea of other giving and taking disappears, when this relation becomes motiveless except for the one sole all-sufficing motive of love, it turns into the free and happy relation of the playmate in the Lila of existence. But closer and more intimate still is the relation of the Mother and the child, and that therefore plays a very large part wherever the religious impulse is most richly fervent and springs most warmly from the heart of man. The soul goes to the Mother-Soul in all its desires and troubles and the divine Mother wishes that it should be so, so that she may pour out her heart of love. It turns to her too because of the self-existent nature of this love and because that points us to the home towards which we turn from our wanderings in the world and to the bosom in which we find our rest." (CWSA 24: 568)

XIX—Divine Love Relieves the Sufferings of the Earth [From Prayers and Meditations]

1.

"September 1, 1914

"O Mother Divine, with what fervour, what ardent love I came to Thee in Thy deepest consciousness, in Thy high status of sublime love and perfect felicity, and I nestled so close into Thy arms and loved Thee with so intense a love that I became altogether Thyself. Then in the silence of our mute ecstasy a voice from yet profounder depths arose and the voice said, 'Turn towards those who have need of thy love.' All the grades of consciousness appeared, all the successive worlds. Some were splendid and luminous, well ordered and clear; there knowledge was resplendent, expression was harmonious and vast, will was potent and invincible. Then the worlds darkened in a multiplicity more and more chaotic, the Energy became violent and the material world obscure and sorrowful. And when in our infinite love we perceived in its entirety the hideous suffering of the world of misery and ignorance, when we saw our children locked in a sombre struggle, flung upon each other by energies that had deviated from their true aim, we willed ardently that the light of Divine Love should be made manifest, a transfiguring force at the centre of these distracted elements. Then, that the will might be yet

more powerful and effective, we turned towards Thee, O unthinkable Supreme, and we implored Thy aid. And from the unsounded depths of the Unknown a reply came sublime and formidable and we knew that the earth was saved." *Prayers and Meditations* (CWSA 32: 633) (CWM 1: 238)

2.

"Oh! let all tears be wiped away, all suffering relieved, all anguish dispelled, and let calm serenity dwell in every heart and powerful certitude strengthen every mind. Let Thy life flow through all like a regenerating stream that all may turn to Thee and draw from that contemplation the energy for all victories. (CWM 1: 49) [From Prayers and Meditations, January 7, 1914]

3.

"But, Lord, I know that it will come one day. I know that a day will come when Thou wilt transform all those who come to us; Thou wilt transform them so radically that, liberated completely from the bonds of the past, they will begin to live in Thee an entirely new life, a life made solely of Thee, with Thee as its sovereign Lord. And in this way all anxieties will be transformed into serenity, all anguish into peace, all doubts into certainties, all ugliness into harmony, all egoism into self-giving, all darkness into light

and all suffering into immutable happiness. (CWM 1: 54) [From Prayers and Meditations, January 11, 1914]

4.

"February 2, 1914

O Lord, I would like to be so ardent a love that all loneliness may be filled up by it and all sorrows soothed. O Lord, I cry unto Thee: Make me a burning brazier which consumes all suffering and transforms it into joyous light irradiating the hearts of all! . . .

Grant my prayer: Transform me into a brazier of pure love and boundless compassion." (CWM 1: 65)

5.

"... I implore that all men upon earth, in spite of their bitter suffering, may feel dawning in it the sublime consolation of Thy light and love, and the marvellous comfort of Thy peace; I implore that every substance impregnated more and more by Thy sovereign forces may put up an ever diminishing resistance of blind ignorance against Thee, and that triumphing over all darkness Thou mayst transfigure definitively and integrally this universe of strife and anguish into a universe of harmony and peace. . . . So that Thy law may be fulfilled." (CWM 1: 68) [From Prayers and Meditations, February 8, 1914]

6.

"This morning my prayer rises to Thee, always with the same aspiration: to live Thy love, to radiate Thy love, with such potency and effectiveness that all may feel fortified, regenerated and illumined by our contact. To have power to heal life, to relieve suffering, to generate peace and calm confidence, to efface anguish and replace it by the sense of the one true happiness, the happiness that is founded in Thee and never fades. . . . O Lord, O marvellous Friend, O all-powerful Master, penetrate all our being, transfigure it till Thou alone livest in us and through us!" (CWM 1: 91)

XX—Divine Love Can Reach You Even in the Depths of Suffering

"If ordeal or fault has cast you down, if you have sunk into the nether depths of suffering, do not grieve—for there indeed the divine love and the supreme blessing can reach you! Because you have passed through the crucible of purifying sorrows, the glorious ascents are yours." (CWM 2: 45)

XXI—With Self-Giving and Self-Forgetfulness in Total Consecration, Suffering Disappears

1.

"It's not the head which has wings: it's the heart. It's this... yes, this inevitable need. Nothing else counts. …

And so, after all, one doesn't care a rap for obstacles and difficulties. What can that do to you?... It doesn't count. One laughs at time also. What does it matter to you if it takes long? For a much longer time you will have the joy of aspiration, of consecration, of self-giving.

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

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

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

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

And only when this joy is established here in this world can it be truly transformed and there be a new life, a new creation, a new realisation. The joy must first be established in the consciousness and then later the material transformation will take place; but not before.

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

…

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

2.

279 – O soldier and hero of God, where for thee is sorrow or shame or suffering? For thy life is a glory, thy deeds a consecration, victory thy apotheosis, defeat thy triumph. [Thoughts and Aphorisms]

For one who is totally consecrated to the Divine, there can be neither shame nor suffering, for the Divine is always with him and the Divine Presence changes all things into glory." (CWM 10: 293)

XXII—Suffering Cannot Bewilder the One Who Has Surrendered to the Eternal

1.

"To the soul that thus knows, adores, offers up all its workings in a great self-surrender of its being to the Eternal, God is all and all is the Godhead. It knows God as the Father of this world who nourishes and cherishes and watches over his children. It knows God as the divine Mother who holds us in her bosom, lavishes upon us the sweetness of her love and fills the universe with her forms of beauty. It knows him as the first Creator from whom has originated all that originates and creates in space and time and relation. It knows him as the Master and ordainer of all universal and of every individual dispensation. The world and fate and uncertain eventuality cannot terrify, the aspect of suffering and evil cannot bewilder the man who has surrendered himself to the Eternal. God to the soul that sees is the path and God is the goal of his journey, a path in which there is no self-losing and a goal to which his wisely guided steps are surely arriving at every moment. He knows the Godhead as the master of his and all being, the upholder of his nature, the husband of the nature-soul, its lover and cherisher, the inner witness of all his thoughts and actions. God is his house and country, the refuge of his seekings and desires, the wise and close and benignant friend of all beings." (CWSA 19: 329–330)

2.

"The will of self-giving forces away by its power the veil between God and man; it annuls every error and annihilates every obstacle. Those who aspire in their human strength by effort of knowledge or effort of virtue or effort of laborious self-discipline, grow with much anxious difficulty towards the Eternal; but when the soul gives up its ego and its works to the Divine, God himself comes to us and takes up our burden. To the ignorant he brings the light of the divine knowledge, to the feeble the power of the divine will, to the sinner the liberation of the divine purity, to the suffering the infinite spiritual joy and Ananda. Their weakness and the stumblings of their human strength make no difference." (CWSA 19: 335)

XXIII—Surrender Also Means to Give Up Our Small, Suffering Personality to the Divine

"Surrender means that, to give up our little mind and its mental ideas and preferences into a divine Light and a greater knowledge, our petty personal troubled blind stumbling will into a great calm tranquil luminous Will and Force, our little restless tormented feelings into a wide intense divine Love and Ananda, our small suffering personality into the one Person of which it is an obscure outcome. If one insists on one's own ideas and reasonings, the greater Light and Knowledge cannot come or else is marred and obstructed in the coming at every step by a lower interference; if one insists on one's own desires and fancies, that great luminous Will and Force cannot act in its own true power—for you ask it to be the servant of your desires; if one refuses to give up one's petty ways of feeling, eternal Love and supreme Ananda cannot descend or is mixed and is spilt from the effervescing crude emotional vessel. No amount of ordinary reasoning can get rid of that necessity of surmounting the lower in order that the higher may be there." (CWSA 28: 385)

XXIV—Suffering Can Arise When the Descending Force Is Seized Without a Conscious, Integral Surrender to the Divine

1.

"Man cannot by his own effort make himself more than man; the mental being cannot by his own unaided force change himself into a supramental spirit. A descent of the Divine Nature can alone divinise the human receptacle.

For the powers of our mind, life and body are bound to their own limitations and, however high they may rise or however widely expand, they cannot rise above their natural ultimate limits or expand beyond them. But, still, mental man can open to what is beyond him and call down a supramental Light, Truth and Power to work in him and do what the mind cannot do. If mind cannot by effort become what is beyond mind, supermind can descend and transform mind into its own substance.

If the supramental Power is allowed by man's discerning assent and vigilant surrender to act according to its own profound and subtle insight and flexible potency, it will bring about slowly or swiftly a divine transformation of our present semiperfect nature.

This descent, this working is not without its possibility of calamitous fall and danger. If the human mind or the vital desire seizes hold on the descending force and tries to use it according to its own limited and erring ideas

or flawed and egoistic impulses,—and this is inevitable in some degree until this lower mortal has learned something of the way of that greater immortal nature,—stumblings and deviations, hard and seemingly insuperable obstacles and wounds and suffering cannot be escaped and even death or utter downfall are not impossible. Only when the conscious integral surrender to the Divine has been learned by mind and life and body, can the way of the Yoga become easy, straight, swift and safe." (CWSA 12: 170)

XXV—Call Upon the Mother in Times of Grief or Despondency

"This kind of grief and despondency are the worst obstacles one can raise up in the sadhana—`they ought not to be indulged in. What one cannot do oneself one can get done by calling the Mother's force. To receive that and let it work in you is the true means of success in the sadhana." (CWSA 32: 298)

XXVI—Meeting Suffering by Awakening the Inner Being and Psychic Being

"What is affected by suffering is the vital nature and the body. When the soul draws towards the Divine, there may be a resistance in the mind and the common form of that is denial and doubt—which may create mental and vital suffering. There may again be a resistance in the vital nature whose principal character is desire and the attachment to the objects of desire, and if in this field there is conflict between the soul and the vital nature, between the Divine Attraction and the pull of the Ignorance, then obviously there may be much suffering of the mind and vital parts. The physical consciousness also may offer a resistance which is usually that of a fundamental inertia, an obscurity in the very stuff of the physical, an incomprehension, an inability to respond to the higher consciousness, a habit of helplessly responding to the lower mechanically, even when it does not want to do so; both vital and physical suffering may be the consequence. … There are two ways to meet all that—first that of the Self, calm, equality, a spirit, a will, a mind, a vital, a physical consciousness that remain resolutely turned towards the Divine and unshaken by all suggestion of doubt, desire, attachment, depression, sorrow, pain, inertia. This is possible when the inner being awakens, when one becomes conscious of the Self, of the inner mind,

the inner vital, the inner physical, for that can more easily attune itself to the divine Will, and then there is a division in the being as if there were two beings, one within, calm, strong, equal, unperturbed, a channel of the Divine Consciousness and Force, one without, still encroached on by the lower Nature; but then the disturbances of the latter [the lower Nature] become something superficial which are no more than an outer ripple,— until these under the inner pressure fade and sink away and the outer being too remains calm, concentrated, unattackable. There is also the way of the psychic,—when the psychic being comes out in its inherent power, its consecration, adoration, love of the Divine, self-giving, surrender and imposes these on the mind, vital and physical consciousness and compels them to turn all their movements Godward. If the psychic is strong and master throughout, then there is no or little subjective suffering and the objective cannot affect either the soul or the other parts of the consciousness—the way is sunlit and a great joy and sweetness are the note of the whole sadhana." (CWSA 31: 668–669)

XXVII—In the Higher Spiritual Nature, There Is an End to Sorrow, Grief and Pain

1.

"The mind of the rajasic man drinks of a more fiery and intoxicating cup; the keen, mobile, active pleasure of the senses and the body and the sense-entangled or fierily kinetic will and intelligence are to him all the joy of life and the very significance of living. This joy is nectar to the lips at the first touch, but there is a secret poison in the bottom of the cup and after it the bitterness of disappointment, satiety, fatigue, revolt, disgust, sin, suffering, loss, transience. And it must be so because these pleasures in their external figure are not the things which the spirit in us truly demands from life; there is something behind and beyond the transience of the form, something that is lasting, satisfying, self-sufficient. What the sattwic nature seeks, therefore, is the satisfaction of the higher mind and the spirit and when it once gets this large object of its quest, there comes in a clear, pure happiness of the soul, a state of fullness, an abiding ease and peace. This happiness does not depend on outward things, but on ourselves alone and on the flowering of what is best and most inward within us. But it is not at first our normal possession; it has to be conquered by self-discipline, a labour of the soul, a high and arduous endeavour. At first this means much loss of habitual pleasure, much suffering

and struggle, a poison born of the churning of our nature, a painful conflict of forces, much revolt and opposition to the change due to the ill-will of the members or the insistence of vital movements, but in the end the nectar of immortality rises in the place of this bitterness and as we climb to the higher spiritual nature we come to the end of sorrow, the euthanasia [the painless killing of a patient suffering from incurable painful disease] of grief and pain. That is the surpassing happiness which descends upon us at the point or line of culmination of the sattwic discipline." (CWSA 19: 505–506)

XXVIII—Organize Your Contradictory Wills, Find Your Way and, Instead of Suffering, Become Powerful Masters of Your Destiny

1.

"*In oneself, there are contradictory wills.*

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

This is the first step.

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

'Very well, it will be thus; my life will develop in that way, because that is the logic of my being. Now, I have arranged all that within me, each thing has been put in its place, and so naturally a central orientation is forming. I am following this orientation. One step more and I know what will happen to me for I myself am deciding it....' …

…

Mother, what is this little screen?

This screen? It is the psychic consciousness.

And this play?

Play? It is the play of the central consciousness. It is precisely the consciousness that is at the origin of the psychic being. And then there you have to take only a tiny step to find out how this psychic consciousness should reflect and translate the one supreme Consciousness. And there the matter ends. This last step becomes very easy.

…

To see clearly, to see one's way, where one is going, why one is going there, how one is to go there and what one is going to do and what is the kind of relation with others... But that is a problem so wonderfully interesting—it is interesting—and you can always discover things every minute! One's work is never finished.

There is a time, there is a certain state of consciousness when you have the feeling that you are in that condition with all the weight of the world lying heavy upon you and besides you are going in blinkers and do not know where you are going, but there is something which is pushing you. And that is truly a very unpleasant condition. And there is another moment when one draws oneself up and is able to see what is there above, and one becomes it; then one looks at the world as though from the top of a very very high mountain and one sees all that is happening below; then one can choose one's way and follow it. That is a more pleasant condition. This then is truly the truth, you are upon earth *for that*, surely. All individual beings and all the little concentrations of consciousness were created to do this work. It is the very reason for existence: to be able to become fully conscious of a certain sum of vibrations representing an individual being and put order there and find one's way and follow it.

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

time, they could have gone through life gloriously and instead of suffering they would have been all-powerful masters of their destiny.

This is not to say that necessarily all things would become pleasant. It is not at all that. But your reaction towards things becomes the true reaction and instead of suffering, you learn; instead of being miserable, you go forward and progress." (CWM 5: 197–201)

XXIX—Through Intimate Contact with the Divine Mother, You Will Be Carried Beyond Suffering into Intense Ananda

1.

"For first by the force of your devotion your contact with the Divine Mother will become so intimate that at all times you will have only to concentrate and to put everything into her hands to have her present guidance, her direct command or impulse, the sure indication of the thing to be done and the way to do it and the result. And afterwards you will realise that the divine Shakti not only inspires and guides, but initiates and carries out your works; all your movements are originated by her, all your powers are hers, mind, life and body are conscious and joyful instruments of her action, means for her play, moulds for her manifestation in the physical universe. There can be no more happy condition than this union and dependence; for this step carries you back beyond the border-line from the life of stress and suffering in the ignorance into the truth of your spiritual being, into its deep peace and its intense Ananda." (CWSA 32: 12–13)

2.

May 6, 1927

"One must know how to give one's life and also one's death, give one's happiness and also one's suffering, to

depend for everything and in all things upon the Divine Dispenser of all our possibilities of realisation, who alone can and will decide whether we shall be happy or not, whether we shall live or not, whether we shall participate or not in the realisation. In the integrality and absoluteness of this love, this self-giving, lies the essential condition for perfect peace, the indispensable foundation of constant beatitude." (CWM 1: 379)

XXX—The Perception That This World Is Marked by Suffering Can Be the Starting Point of the Spiritual Urge

1.

"It is not to be denied, no spiritual experience will deny that this is an unideal and unsatisfactory world, strongly marked with the stamp of inadequacy, suffering, evil. Indeed this perception is in a way almost the starting-point of the spiritual urge—except for the few to whom the greater experience comes spontaneously without being forced to seek it by the strong or overwhelming, the afflicting and detaching sense of the Shadow overhanging the whole range of this manifested existence. … to our ignorance or to a partial knowledge—the imperfection, the evil, the suffering may be a besetting circumstance or a dolorous passage, but not the very condition of manifestation, not the very essence of birth in Nature. And if so, the highest wisdom will lie not in escape, but in the urge towards a victory here, in a consenting association with the Will behind the world, in a discovery of the spiritual gate to perfection which will be at the same time an opening for the entire descent of the Divine Light, Knowledge, Power, Beatitude." (CWSA 28: 253)

2.

"Suffering is not something inevitable or even desirable, but when it comes to us, how helpful it can be!

Each time we feel that our heart is breaking, a deeper door opens within us, revealing new horizons, ever richer in hidden treasures, whose golden influx brings once more a new and intenser life to the organism on the brink of destruction.

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)

3.

"Sometimes pain and suffering are means by which the soul is awakened and pushed forward to the Divine. That is the experience on which X constantly dwells as he has suffered much in his life—but all do not find it like that." (CWSA 31: 670)

XXXI—First Recover from the Suffering of Illness, Then Follow Yogic Processes

1.

"It would be difficult for anyone suffering from nervous debility to follow Yogic processes; the recovery of health would be a necessary preliminary. It would be especially dangerous in Sri Aurobindo's path of Yoga." (CWSA 35: 530)

2.

"It is evident that you are suffering from a nervous reaction due to overstrain. You have allowed for a long time an excessive vital energy kept up by a concentration of vital excitement to tyrannise over your body. The body was being weakened all the time, but the vital excitement prevented you from feeling it. Now it is making itself felt. The pains you have seem to be partly rheumatic, partly due to fatigue of the nerves. If you want to recover your strength, you must consent to take plenty of rest. Do not consider long rest and repose tamasic. Sleep long at night, rest much during the day." [Part of the letter written to Tirupati during March–April 1926] (CWM 36:324)

XXXII—Suffering from the Sense of Dullness Occurs Because the Descending Force Discourages the Old Movements

1.

"All in the Asram are not suffering from the sense of dullness and want of interest, but many are because the Force that is descending is discouraging the old movements of the physical and vital mind which they call life and they are not accustomed to accept the renunciation of these things, or to admit the peace or joy of silence." (CWSA 35: 360–361)

XXXIII—It's an Absurd Idea to Display Suffering When Approaching the Mother to Receive More

1.

"X is doing like many others—they are cheerful outside, but sorrowful or displeased or suffering when they come to the Mother or write to her. There is a sort of idea (which was long current in the Asram) and there is still a feeling in the vital that the more you do that with the Mother the more you will get out of her. Of course it is absurdly untrue—the truth is the opposite; the more one is cheerfully open to her and lives in the light and gladness, the more one is likely to receive." (CWSA 32: 560)

XXXIV—If One Makes Oneself a Mouthpiece of the Hostile Forces and Engages in Falsehoods, One Can Suffer in Health

1.

"As for Y, if he said and thought a thing like that, it explains why he has been suffering in health so much lately. If one makes oneself a mouthpiece of the hostile forces and lends oneself to their falsehoods, it is not surprising that something in him should get out of order." (CWSA 32: 318)

XXXV—Merely the Idea of Becoming Superman Is an Act of Vital Egoism That Can Lead to Grief

1.

"To come to this Yoga merely with the idea of being a superman would be an act of vital egoism which would defeat its own object. Those who put this object in the front of their preoccupations invariably come to grief, spiritually and otherwise. The aim of this Yoga is, first, to enter into the divine consciousness by merging into it the separative ego (incidentally, in doing so one finds one's true individual self which is not the limited, vain and selfish human ego but a portion of the Divine) and, secondly, to bring down the supramental consciousness on earth to transform mind, life and body. All else can be only a result of these two aims, not the primary object of the Yoga." (CWSA 29: 21)

XXXVI—If the Atmosphere of the Ashram Remains the Same as That of the Outside World, Dark Forces Can Enter and Result in Suffering

1.

"If India is in danger, Pondicherry cannot be expected to remain outside the danger zone. It will share the fate of the rest of the country. The protection I can give is not unconditional. It is idle to hope that in spite of anything and everything, the protection will be there over all. My protection is there if conditions are fulfilled. It goes without saying that any sympathy or support for the Nazis (or for any ally of theirs) automatically cuts across the circle of protection. Apart from this obvious and external factor, there are more fundamental psychological conditions which demand fulfilment. The Divine can give protection only to those who are whole-heartedly faithful to the Divine, who live truly in the spirit of sadhana and keep their consciousness and preoccupation fixed upon the Divine and the service of the Divine. Desire, for example, insistence on one's likes and conveniences, all movements of hypocrisy and insincerity and falsehood, are great obstacles standing in the way of the Divine's protection. If you seek to impose your will upon the Divine, it is as if you were calling for a bomb to fall upon you. I do not say that things are bound to happen in this way; but they are very likely to happen, if people do not become conscious and

strictly vigilant and act in the true spirit of a spiritual seeker. If the psychological atmosphere remains the same as that of the outside world, there can be no sure wall of security against the dark Forces that are working out in it the ordeal of danger, suffering and destruction entering here." (CWM 13: 121)

XXXVII—A Perverse Need for Suffering by the Ascetic Is Very Far Removed from All Spiritual Life

1.

"These practices, which consist of illtreating the body in order, so they say, to liberate the spirit from it, are in fact a sensuous distortion of spiritual discipline; it is a kind of perverse need for suffering which drives the ascetic to self-mortification. The sadhu's recourse to the bed of nails or the Christian anchorite's resort to the whip and the hair-shirt are the result of a more or less veiled sadistic tendency, unavowed and unavowable; it is an unhealthy seeking or a subconscious need for violent sensations. In reality, these things are very far removed from all spiritual life, for they are ugly and base, dark and diseased; whereas spiritual life, on the contrary, is a life of light and balance, beauty and joy. They are invented and extolled by a sort of mental and vital cruelty towards the body. But cruelty, even with regard to one's own body, is nonetheless cruelty, and all cruelty is a sign of great unconsciousness. Unconscious natures need very strong sensations, for without them they can feel nothing; and cruelty, which is one form of sadism, brings very strong sensations. The avowed purpose of such practices is to abolish all sensation so that the body may no longer stand in the way of one's flight towards the spirit; but the effectiveness of this method is open to doubt. It is a recognised fact that in

order to progress rapidly, one must not be afraid of difficulties; on the contrary, by choosing to do the difficult thing at every opportunity, one increases the will-power and strengthens the nerves." (CWM 12: 49)

XXXVIII—The True Solution to Suffering Is Not Escape from Earth but Transformation

1.

"From beyond the frontiers of form a new force can be evoked, a power of consciousness which is as yet unexpressed and which, by its emergence, will be able to change the course of things and give birth to a new world. For the true solution to the problem of suffering, ignorance and death is not an individual escape from earthly miseries by self-annihilation into the unmanifest, nor a problematical collective flight from universal suffering by an integral and final return of the creation to its creator, thus curing the universe by abolishing it, but a transformation, a total transfiguration of matter brought about by the logical continuation of Nature's ascending march in her progress towards perfection, by the creation of a new species that will be to man what man is to the animal and that will manifest upon earth a new force, a new consciousness and a new power. And so will begin a new education which can be called the supramental education; it will, by its all-powerful action, work not only upon the consciousness of individual beings, but upon the very substance of which they are built and upon the environment in which they live." (CWM 12: 37–38)

2.

"And one day, you ask yourself, 'But then, why is one born? Why does one die? Why does one suffer? Why does one act?'

You no longer live like a little machine, hardly halfconscious. You want to feel truly, to act truly, to know truly. …

You go to the Samadhi, look at Sri Aurobindo's picture, you come to receive a flower from me, sit down to a lesson; you do everything you do but... with one question within you: Why?

And then, if you ask the question, you receive the answer.

Why?

Because we don't want life as it is any longer, because we don't want falsehood and ignorance any longer, because we don't want suffering and unconsciousness any longer, because we do not want disorder and bad will any longer, because Sri Aurobindo has come to tell us: It is not necessary to leave the earth to find the Truth, it is not necessary to leave life to find one's soul, it is not necessary to give up the world or to have limited beliefs in order to enter into relation with the Divine. The Divine is everywhere, in everything, and if He is hidden... it is because we do not take the trouble to discover Him.

We can, simply by a sincere aspiration, open a sealed door in us and find... that Something which will change the whole significance of life, reply to all our questions, solve all our problems and lead us to the perfection we aspire for without knowing it, to that Reality which *alone* can satisfy us and give us lasting joy, equilibrium, strength, life." (CWM 9: 374–375)

XXXIX—Escape from Suffering into Nirvana Is Not Indispensable

1.

"The push to Nirvana has two motive forces behind it. One is the sense of the imperfection, sorrow, death, suffering of this world—the original motive force of the Buddha. But for escape from these afflictions Nirvana might not be necessary, if there are higher worlds into which one can ascend where there is no such imperfection, sorrow, death or suffering. But this other possibility of escape is met by the idea that these higher worlds too are transient and part of the Ignorance, that one has to return here always till one overcomes the Ignorance, that the Reality and the cosmic existence are as Truth and Falsehood, opposite, incompatible. This brings in the second motive force, that of the call to Transcendence. If the Transcendent is not only supracosmic but an aloof Incommunicable, *avyavahāryam*, which one cannot reach except by a negation of all that is here, then some kind of Nirvana, an absolute Nirvana even is inevitable. If on the other hand the Divine is transcendent but not incommunicable, the call will still be there and the soul will leave the chequered cosmic play for the beatitude of the transcendent existence, but an absolute Nirvana would not be indispensable; a beatific union with the Divine offers itself as the way before the seeker. This is the reason why the

Cosmic Consciousness is not sufficient and the push away from it is so strong,—it is only if the golden lid of the Overmind is overpassed and opened and the dynamic contact with the Supermind and a descent of its Light and Power here is intended that it can be otherwise." (CWSA 28: 143–144)

2.

"Undoubtedly a release from the limitations of the mind and body into an eternal peace, rest, silence of the Spirit, makes a higher appeal than the offer of a heaven of mental joys or eternised physical pleasures, but this too after all is a lure; its insistence on the mind's world-weariness, the life-being's shrinking from the adventure of birth, strikes a chord of weakness and cannot be the supreme motive. The desire of personal salvation, however high its form, is an outcome of ego; it rests on the idea of our own individuality and its desire for its personal good or welfare, its longing for a release from suffering or its cry for the extinction of the trouble of becoming and makes that the supreme aim of our existence. To rise beyond the desire of personal salvation is necessary for the complete rejection of this basis of ego. If we seek the Divine, it should be for the sake of the Divine and for nothing else, because that is the supreme call of our being, the deepest truth of the spirit." (CWSA 23: 269)

3.

"You carry with you, around you, in you, the atmosphere created by your actions, and if what you do is beautiful, good and harmonious, your atmosphere is beautiful, good and harmonious; on the other hand, if you live in a sordid selfishness, unscrupulous self-interest, ruthless bad will, that is what you will breathe every moment of your life and that means misery, constant uneasiness; it means ugliness that despairs of its own ugliness.

And you must not believe that by leaving the body you will free yourself of this atmosphere; on the contrary, the body is a kind of a veil of unconsciousness which diminishes the intensity of the suffering. If you are without the protection of the body in the most material vital life, the suffering becomes much more acute and you no longer have the opportunity to change what is to be changed, to correct what is to be corrected, to open yourself to a higher, happier and more luminous life and consciousness.

You must make haste to do your work here, for it is here that you can truly do it.

Expect nothing from death. Life is your salvation.

It is in life that you must transform yourself. It is upon earth that you progress and it is upon earth that you realise. It is in the body that you win the Victory." (CWM 3: 198)

4.

"*But this very attitude of wanting to become identified with the Unmanifest and letting the world suffer, isn't this selfishness?*

Yes. And so what happens is very remarkable, the result is always the same: those who have done that, at the last minute, have received a sort of intimation that they had to return to the world and do their work. It is as though they reached the door and—'Ah! No, no, not yet—go back and work. When the world is ready, then this will be all right'." (CWM 6: 34)

5.

"*Then, Mother why do all the spiritual schools in India have as their doctrine escape from action?*

Yes, because all this is founded upon the teaching that life is an illusion. It began with the teaching of the Buddha who said that existence was the fruit of desire, and that there was only one way of coming out of misery and suffering and desire; it was to come out of existence. And then this continued with Shankara who added that not only is it the fruit of desire but it is a total illusion, and as long as you live in this illusion you cannot realise the Divine. For him there was not even the Divine, I think; for the Buddha, at least, there wasn't any." (CWM 7: 288)

6.

"Neither can the other solution, escape, the solution of the Buddha, present a practical remedy to the problem [to cure humanity of its misery and suffering]. For even if we suppose that a very large number of individuals are capable of practising the discipline and achieving the final liberation, this can in no way abolish suffering from earth and cure others of it, all the others who are still incapable of following the path that leads to Nirvana." (CWM 12: 97)

XL—Suffering and Illness Are Contradictions to What Sri Aurobindo and the Mother Are Striving for

1.

"If anyone is in serious trouble in this Asram, that falls on us and most on the Mother—so it is absurd to suppose that we should take pleasure in anyone suffering. Suffering, illness, vital storms (lusts, revolts, angers) are so many contradictions of what we are striving for and therefore obstacles to our work. To end them as soon as possible is the only will we can have, not to keep them in existence.

If you could only acquire the power to detach yourself somewhere in you when these storms come, not to be swept away by the push or the thoughts that rise! Then there would be something that could feel the support and be able to react against these forces." (CWSA 32: 553)

2.

"The storm, cloud, difficulty, suffering come, but they are no part of the Yogic idea; they belong to the Nature that is now, not to the divine Nature that is to be." (CWM 35: 681)

3.

"It is not at all the Mother's wish or will that you or anyone should remain in grief and despair; what she likes is that you should confide in her and be happy and cheerful.

That is what the Mother wants, that you should remain near her always in an inner gladness of heart and outer happiness of the life." (CWSA 32: 394)

XLI—A Day Will Come When There Will Be No More Suffering

1.

"*Will a day come when there will be no more poor people and no more suffering in the world?*

That is absolutely certain for all those who understand Sri Aurobindo's teaching and have faith in him.

It is with the intention of creating a place where this could come about that we want to establish Auroville.

But for this realisation to be possible, each one of us must make an effort to transform himself; for most of the sufferings of men are the result of their own mistakes, both physical and moral." (CWM 13: 203) (CWM 10: 268)

XLII—Psychic Weeping Has No Suffering in It

1.

"Psychic weeping, a weeping from the soul deep within, tears of the soul's yearning, of sorrow for the resistance of Nature, of joy or love or bhakti does not cause a fall, it can help and open up the inner soul from its veils; but this weeping has no strain or suffering in it, it is something very deep and quiet and brings a sense of purification and release. That is not so with the weeping which comes from the vital and is born of hurt or abhiman or disappointment or shakes or disturbs the nature." (CWSA 32: 512)

2.

"Q: Nowadays I feel very intensely a sorrow which brings a flow of tears in my eyes. There is no unrest or disturbance in it, rather there is a feeling of calm and purity and a deep gravity associated with it. Is this what is called the psychic sorrow?

A: Yes, there is a psychic sorrow of that kind—but psychic tears need not be sorrowful, there are also tears of emotion and joy." (CWM 6: 144)

XLIII—The Divine's Deep Compassion Is Translated into Matter by Psychic Sorrow

1.

"(Another child) *Mother, sometimes I see you weeping in my dreams.*

What? I am weeping?

Yes, You, weeping.

I, I weep? (*Laughter)*

Yes.

Wait a little!... That's when one is very sad oneself, isn't it?

Perhaps.

That, indeed, is very symbolic. It means precisely... no, I shall tell you afterwards. But generally speaking, it means this: that every time one is unhappy, well, it is one more suffering added to the collective suffering of the Divine.

It is from a state of deep compassion that the Divine acts in Matter and this deep compassion is translated in Matter precisely by this psychic sorrow ... That is as though something were reversed, it is the same thing but reversed

in this way (Mother joins her hands and then opens them as in an offering.)

Well, the Divine's state of compassion is translated in the psychic consciousness by a sorrow that is not egoistic, a sorrow that is the expression of the identification through sympathy with universal sorrow. In the *Prayers and Meditations* I have said this (in one of the later ones), I have described at length an experience in which way I say, 'I wept... the sweetest tears of my life', because it was not over myself that I wept, you understand. Well, that is it." (CWM 6: 143–144)

XLIV—The Experience of the Mother Expressing Psychic Sorrow in the *Prayers and Meditations*

1.

July 12, 1918

"SUDDENLY, before Thee, all my pride fell. I understood how futile it was in Thy Presence to wish to surmount oneself, and I wept, wept abundantly and without constraint the sweetest tears of my life. . . . Ah yes, how refreshing, how calm and sweet were those tears I shed before Thee without shame or constraint! Was it not like a child in its father's arms? But what a Father! What sublimity, what magnificence, what immensity of comprehension! And what a power and plenitude in the response! Yes, my tears were like holy dew. Was it because it was not for my own sorrow that I wept? Tears sweet and beneficent, tears that opened my heart without constraint before Thee and melted in one miraculous moment all the remaining obstacles that could separate me from Thee!

Some days ago I had known it, I had heard: 'If thou canst weep without restraint or disguise before Me, many things will change, a great victory will be won.' And that is why when the tears rose from my heart to my eyes, I came and sat before Thee to let them flow as an offering, devotedly. And how sweet and comforting was the offering!

And now, although I weep no longer, I feel so near, so near to Thee that my whole being quivers with joy.

Let me stammer out my homage:

I have cried too with the joy of a child, 'O supreme and only Confidant, Thou who knowest beforehand all we can say to Thee because Thou art its source!

'O supreme and only Friend, Thou who acceptest, Thou who lovest, Thou who understandest us just as we are, because it is Thyself who hast so made us!

'O supreme and only Guide, Thou who never gainsayest our highest will because it is Thou Thyself who willest in it!

'It would be folly to seek elsewhere than in Thee for one who will listen, understand, love and guide, since always Thou art there ready to our call and never wilt Thou fail us!

'Thou hast made me know the supreme, the sublime joy of a perfect confidence, an absolute serenity, a surrender total and without reserve or colouring, free from effort or constraint.

Joyous like a child I have smiled and wept at once before Thee, O my Well-Beloved!" (CWM 1: 374–375)

XLV—When the Psychic Gets Mingled with Sorrow, It Can Reach Universal Compassion

1.

"You know, human beings always suffer because of egoistic causes, humanly. Even when, for instance (I have explained this often), they lose someone they loved, and suffer and weep, it is not over the state of that person they weep, for most of the time, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, they do not know the state of the person, they cannot even know whether that person is happy or unhappy, whether he is suffering or in peace, but it is over the sense of separation they themselves experience, because they loved to have that person near them and he has gone. So, always at the root of human sorrow there is a turning back upon oneself, more or less conscious, more or less—how to put it?—acknowledged, but it is always that. Even when one weeps over another's misery, there is always a mixture. There is a mixture, but as soon as the psychic gets mingled in the sorrow, there is an element of 'compassion in reverse' (that's what I was trying to explain a moment ago) which comes into the being and, if one can disentangle the two, concentrate upon that, come out of one's ego and unite with this compassion in reverse, through this one can come into contact with the great universal Compassion which is something immense, vast, calm, powerful, deep, full of perfect peace and an infinite

sweetness. And this is what I mean when I say that if one just knows how to deepen one's sorrow, go right to its very heart, rise beyond the egoistic and personal part and go deeper, one can open the door of a great revelation. That does not mean that you must seek sorrow for sorrow's sake, but when it is there, when it comes upon you, always if you can manage to rise above the egoism of your sorrow—seeing first which is the egoistic part, what it is that makes you suffer, what the egoistic cause of your suffering is, and then rising above that and going beyond, towards something universal, towards a deep fundamental truth, then you enter that infinite Compassion, and there, truly it is a psychic door that opens. So, if someone sees me shedding tears, if at that moment one tries to unite completely—you understand, to enter into these tears, melt in them—this can open the door." (CWM 6: 144–145)

XLVI—Cosmic Consciousness Does Not Inhibit Divine Compassion, but It Does Inhibit Human and Animal Sorrow and Suffering

"Not only Spirit is one, but Mind, Life, Matter are one. There is one cosmic Mind, one cosmic Life, one cosmic Body. … Even our bodies are not really separate entities and therefore our very physical consciousness is capable of oneness with the physical consciousness of others and of the cosmos. …

… In the first stage the soul is still subject to the reactions of the duality, still subject therefore to the lower Prakriti; it is depressed or hurt by the cosmic suffering, elated by the cosmic joy. We suffer the joys of others, suffer their griefs; and this oneness can be carried even into the body, as in the story of the Indian saint who, seeing a bullock tortured in the field by its cruel owner, cried out with the creature's pain and the weal of the lash was found reproduced on his own flesh. But there must be a oneness with Sachchidananda in his freedom as well as with the subjection of the lower being to the reactions of Prakriti. This is achieved when the soul is free and superior to the cosmic reactions which are then felt only in the life, mind and body and as an inferior movement; the soul understands, accepts the experience, sympathises, but is not overpowered or affected, so that at last even the mind and body learn also to accept without being overpowered

or even affected except on their surface. And the consummation of this movement is when the two spheres of existence are no longer divided and the mind, life and body obeying utterly the higher law grow into the spirit's freedom; free from the lower or ignorant response to the cosmic touches, their struggle and their subjection to the duality ceases. This does not mean insensibility to the subjection and struggles and sufferings of others, but it does mean a spiritual supremacy and freedom which enables one to understand perfectly, put the right values on things and heal from above instead of struggling from below. It does not inhibit the divine compassion and helpfulness, but it does inhibit the human and animal sorrow and suffering." (CWSA 23: 415–417)

XLVII—Man Evolving from the Mental into the Spiritual Will Be Free from Grief

1.

"Were we to put this in modern language we should say: Man is evolutionary, not evolved; his present state of mentality in heart guided by reason is a transition, not his final nature; in mentality he is tied to desire, in body to limitation and in both to suffering, but when he evolves from the mental into the spiritual being, he will be free from grief because, living in infinite Spirit, he will have done with desire and limitation." (CWSA 17: 478)

2.

"In the *līlā* of the Eternal there are movements that are terrible as well as movements that are sweet and beautiful. The dance of Brindaban is not complete without the death-dance of Kurukshetra; for each is a part of that great harmonic movement of the world which progresses from discord to accord, from hatred and strife to love and brotherhood, from evil to the fulfilment of the evolution by the transformation of suffering and sin into beauty, bliss and good, *śivam, śāntam, śuddham, ānandam."* (CWSA 13: 30–31)

XLVIII—He Who Knows and He Who Wants to Know Meet; Then Springs a New Hope in the World

1.

"In an age like ours success alone counts and the material satisfactions it brings. However, an ever-increasing number of dissatisfied people are seeking to know the reason of life. And, on the other hand, there are sages who know and strive to help suffering humanity and to spread the light of knowledge. When the two meet, he who knows and he who wants to know, there springs up a new hope in the world, and a little light penetrates the prevailing darkness." (CWM 14: 60)

XLIX—To Grow into Bliss Is the Crown of Integral Yoga

"To become one in our absolute being with the ineffable Divine and in the manifestation a free movement of his being, power, consciousness and self-realising joy, to grow into a divine Truth consciousness beyond mind, into a Light beyond all human or earthly lights, into a Power to which the greatest strengths of men are a weakness, into the wisdom of an infallible gnosis and the mastery of an unerring and unfailing divinity of Will, into a Bliss beside which all human pleasure is as the broken reflection of a candle-flame to the all-pervading splendour of an imperishable sun, but all this not for our own sake [but] for the pleasure of the Divine Beloved, this is the goal and the crown of the supramental path of Yoga.

This change is a thing in Nature and not out of Nature; it is not only possible, but for the growing soul inevitable. It is the goal to which Nature in us walks through all this appearance of ignorance, error, suffering and weakness." (CWSA 12: 364)

L—Sri Aurobindo's Yoga Does Not Approve of Sorrow, Pain and Suffering as Earlier Yogas Did

1.

"Sorrow and pain and suffering? The curious thing is that my Yoga does not approve of sorrow and suffering or of taking stumbles and difficulties too seriously, as the Tapaswis do or of viraha pangs as the Vaishnavas do or of vairagya as the Mayavadis do, yet the old ideas and forces bring these things into the Asram through the minds of the sadhaks and there they are. Well, well!" (CWSA 31: 177)

2.

"If sadhana is a struggle between the higher will and the old forces of nature bringing suffering and inner torment, we do not want you to do that kind of sadhana. That is not the spirit of our Yoga. What we want you to do is to recover your quietude and go on in that. To have the basis of quietude and allow the Divine Force to work in you firmly and quietly is always the best method—it is not necessary to proceed through a big personal effort, disturbance and struggle. Come back to this—open yourself once more, as you did before—then you could get back sleep or health in a day or two and were growing inwardly without excessive trouble—and let the Mother's Power and Grace lead you. I shall do all to help you and pull you out, but that which has closed itself in you must open for the help to work quickly

as it did before. Otherwise too it can pull you out, but if there is this strong obstruction that has to be undone, time is needed. A central change of attitude in your mind would, I believe, make all the difference—it has done so before." (CWSA 31: 746)

LI—Liberation of Humanity from Suffering Can Be Achieved by Descent and Transformation

"I certainly hope to bring down an effective power of the Truth which will replace eventually the Falsehood that has governed the minds and hearts of men for so long. The liberation of a few individuals is a thing that is always possible and has always been done—but, to my seeing, it cannot be the sole aim of existence. Whatever the struggles and sufferings and blunders of humanity, there is still in it an urge towards the Light, an impulse towards a greater Truth not only of the soul but the life. If it [liberation of humanity] has not been done yet, it is surely because those who reached the Light and the greater Truth, rested there and saw in it more a means of escape for the soul than a means of transformation for the life. The liberation of the spirit is necessary, nothing can be done without it—but the transformation is also possible." (CWSA 28: 295)

LII—In a Spiritualized Society, Suffering Souls Will Be Rescued

1.

"A spiritualised society would treat in its sociology the individual, from the saint to the criminal, not as units of a social problem to be passed through some skilfully devised machinery and either flattened into the social mould or crushed out of it, but as souls suffering and entangled in a net and to be rescued, souls growing and to be encouraged to grow, souls grown and from whom help and power can be drawn by the lesser spirits who are not yet adult." (CWSA 25: 257)

2.

"However, it may be useful to say what the superman will certainly not be, so as to clear away certain misunderstandings. For example, I have read somewhere that the superhuman race would be fundamentally cruel and insensitive; since it is above suffering, it will attach no importance to the suffering of others and will take it as a sign of their imperfection and inferiority. No doubt, those who think in this way are judging the relations between superman and man from the manner in which man behaves towards his lesser brethren, the animals. But such behaviour, far from being a proof of superiority, is a sure sign of unconsciousness and stupidity. This is shown by the

fact that as soon as man rises to a little higher level, he begins to feel compassion towards animals and seeks to improve their lot. Yet there is an element of truth in the conception of the unfeeling superman: it is this, that the higher race will not feel the kind of egoistic, weak and sentimental pity which men call charity. This pity, which does more harm than good, will be replaced by a strong and enlightened compassion whose only purpose will be to provide a true remedy to suffering, not to perpetuate it." (CWM 12: 100)

3.

"The supramental being will have no need, for that, of an altruistic self-effacement, since this occupation will be intimate to his self-fulfilment, the fulfilment of the One in all, and there will be no contradiction or strife between his own good and the good of others: nor will he have any need to acquire a universal sympathy by subjecting himself to the joys and griefs of creatures in the Ignorance; his cosmic sympathy will be part of his inborn truth of being and not dependent on a personal participation in the lesser joy and suffering; it will transcend what it embraces and in that transcendence will be its power. His feeling of universality, his action of universality will be always a spontaneous state and natural movement, an automatic expression of the Truth, an act of the joy of the spirit's self-existence. There could be in it no place for limited self or

desire or for the satisfaction or frustration of the limited self or the satisfaction or frustration of desire, no place for the relative and dependent happiness and grief that visit and afflict our limited nature; for these are things that belong to the ego and the Ignorance, not to the freedom and truth of the Spirit.” (CWSA 21: 1011)

LIII—The Mother Wants to Eliminate the Cause of Suffering by Divinizing Matter through the Integral Transformation

1.

(A donor to Auroville specified:)

"*I want my money to be used exclusively for conquering the causes of our sufferings and miseries.*

It is for this that we all work here, but not in the artificial manner of philanthropists who work on the exterior effects only.

We want to eliminate for good the *cause* of suffering by divinising matter through the integral transformation." (CWM 13: 247)

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