How To Account For Suffering If Existence Is Delight

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

How to Account for Suffering If Existence Is Delight

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, *How to Account for Suffering If Existence Is Delight* is the sixth 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

Contents

I—Why Must Sorrow Enter into the Divine Good, Bliss and Peace? .1
II—Those Who Are Concerned About the Fate of Humankind Are Not Satisfied With the Current Situation 7
III—How Creation Happened in the Form of a Story.....10
IV—Why a Plunge Should Ever Have Been Undertaken by the Supreme Consciousness, Bringing Suffering.....15
V—In Creation, Suffering Was a Terrible but Reparable Accident .19
VI—Once the Conditions of the Cosmos Were Laid Down and the Involution into Nescience Was Accepted, a Division Took Place between the Higher and the Lower 24
VII—Even After Witnessing Suffering, What Pushes Humanity to Affirm That All Is Secretly Divine.....28
VIII—God Suffers When You Suffer, as There Is No Difference between God and His Creation.....33
IX—Far from Being a Torturer, the Divine Is the Love that Guides through the Quickest Routes in a Progressive March towards Perfection.....38
X—If Existence Is Infinite Self-Delight, How to Account for Grief, Suffering and Pain.....40
XI—The Mother Explains Why There Was the Indispensable Error of the Material World 57
XII—Unite With the Divine and Then You Will Understand Why There Is Suffering.....59
XIII—Never Be the Cause of Any Additional Suffering in the World 62
XIV—When Will Suffering Be Abolished from the World? 63
XV—When the Earth No Longer Needs to Suffer in Order to Progress, There Will Be No More Suffering 64
Other Comprehensive Compilations by Jamshed M. Mavalwalla....67

I—Why Must Sorrow Enter into the Divine Good, Bliss and Peace?

1. It is hard to answer the human intelligence at its own level

"But still what is the purpose and origin of the disharmony—why came this division and ego, this world of a painful evolution? Why must this evil and sorrow enter into the divine Good, Bliss and Peace? It is hard to answer to the human intelligence on its own level, for the consciousness to which the origin of this phenomenon belongs and to which it stands as it were automatically justified in a supra-intellectual knowledge, is a cosmic and not an individualised human intelligence; it sees in larger spaces, it has another vision and cognition, other terms of consciousness than human reason and feeling." (CWSA 28: 257)

2. Once manifestation began, negation of the power, light, peace, bliss began

"To the human mind one might answer that while in itself the Infinite might be free from those perturbations, yet once manifestation began infinite possibility also began and among the infinite possibilities which it is the function of the universal manifestation to work out, the negation,

the apparent effective negation—with all its consequences—of the Power, Light, Peace, Bliss was very evidently one." (CWSA 28: 257)

3. In the transition of the Divine in the Oneness to the Divine in the Many, this ominous possibility became inevitable at a certain point

"If it is asked why even if possible it should have been accepted, the answer nearest to the Cosmic Truth which the human intelligence can make is that in the relations or in the transition of the Divine in the Oneness to the Divine in the Many, this ominous possible became at a certain point an inevitable. For once it appears it acquires for the Soul descending into evolutionary manifestation an irresistible attraction which creates the inevitability—an attraction which in human terms on the terrestrial level might be interpreted as the call of the unknown, the joy of danger and difficulty and adventure, the will to attempt the impossible, to work out the incalculable, the will to create the new and uncreated with one's own self and life as the material, the fascination of contradictories and their difficult harmonization—these things translated into another supraphysical, superhuman consciousness, higher and wider than the mental, were the temptation that led to the fall. For to the original being of light on the

verge of the descent the one thing unknown was the depths of the abyss, the possibilities of the Divine in the Ignorance and Inconscience." (CWSA 28: 257–258)

4. If the plunge into night was inevitable, the emergence into a new unprecedented day was also a certainty

"On the other side from the Divine Oneness a vast acquiescence, compassionate, consenting, helpful, a supreme knowledge that this thing must be, that having appeared it must be worked out, that its appearance is in a certain sense part of an incalculable infinite wisdom, that if the plunge into Night was inevitable the emergence into a new unprecedented Day was also a certitude, and that only so could a certain manifestation of the Supreme Truth be effected—by a working out with its phenomenal opposites as the starting-point of the evolution, as the condition laid down for a transforming emergence." (CWSA 28: 258)

5. Then the descent of the Divine into the inconscience to take up the burden of ignorance and its consequences

"In this acquiescence was embraced too the will of the great Sacrifice, the descent of the Divine itself into the

Inconscience to take up the burden of the Ignorance and its consequences, to intervene as the Avatar and the Vibhuti walking between the double sign of the Cross and the victory towards the fulfilment and deliverance. A too imaged rendering of the inexpressible Truth? but without images how to present to the intellect a mystery far beyond it?" (CWSA 28: 258)

6. It is by entering into that greater consciousness alone that one can grasp the inevitability of its self-creation and its purpose

"It is only when one has crossed the barrier of the limited intelligence and shared in the cosmic experience and the knowledge which sees things from identity that the supreme realities which lie behind these images—images corresponding to the terrestrial fact—assume their divine forms and are felt as simple, natural, implied in the essence of things. It is by entering into that greater consciousness alone that one can grasp the inevitability of its self-creation and its purpose.

This is indeed only the Truth of the manifestation as it presents itself to the consciousness when it stands on the border line between Eternity and the descent into Time where the relation between the One and the Many

in the evolution is self-determined, a zone where all that is to be is implied but not yet in action. ” (CWSA 28: 258)

7. The liberated consciousness can rise higher and see that absolute delight is behind all creation

"But the liberated consciousness can rise higher where the problem exists no longer and from there see it in the light of a supreme identity where all is predetermined in the automatic self-existent truth of things and self-justified to an absolute consciousness and wisdom and absolute Delight which is behind all creation and non-creation and the affirmation and negation are both seen with the eyes of the ineffable Reality that delivers and reconciles them. But that knowledge is not expressible to the human mind; its language of light is too undecipherable, the light itself too bright for a consciousness accustomed to the stress and obscurity of the cosmic riddle and too entangled in it to follow the clue or to grasp the secret. In any case, it is only when we rise in the spirit beyond the zone of the darkness and the struggle that we enter into the full significance of it and there is a deliverance of the soul from its enigma. To rise to that height of liberation is the true way out and the only means of the indubitable knowledge.” (CWSA 28: 258–259)

8. This liberation and transcendence can transform the world and fulfill the evolutionary urge

"But that liberation and transcendence need not necessarily impose a disappearance, a sheer dissolving cut from the manifestation; it can prepare a liberation into action of the highest Knowledge and an intensity of Power that can transform the world and fulfil the evolutionary urge. It is an ascent from which the return is no longer a fall but a winged or self-sustained descent of light, force and Ananda." (CWSA 28: 258–259)

II—Those Who Are Concerned About the Fate of Humankind Are Not Satisfied With the Current Situation

1. The question they ask is why one lives if only to suffer

"For there is a series of fundamental questions which those who are concerned about the fate of mankind and are not satisfied with current formulas inevitably ask themselves. They can be formulated approximately as follows:

Why is one born if only to die?
Why does one live if only to suffer?
Why does one love if only to be separated?
Why does one think if only to err?
Why does one act if only to make mistakes?" (CWM 12: 99)

2. The earth is in a period of transition and this period will end with the appearance of supramental consciousness

"The sole acceptable answer is that things are not what they ought to be and that these contradictions are not only not inevitable but they are rectifiable and will one day disappear. For the world is not irremediably what it

is. The earth is in a period of transition that certainly seems long to the brief human consciousness, but which is infinitesimal for the eternal consciousness. And this period will come to an end with the appearance of the supramental consciousness. The contradictions will then be replaced by harmonies and the oppositions by syntheses." (CWM 12: 99)

3. Only by becoming conscious of the divine nature can one have a conception of what the divine nature will be in the manifestation

"This new creation, the appearance of a superhuman race, has already been the object of much speculation and controversy. It pleases man's imagination to draw more or less flattering portraits of what the superman will be like. But only like can know like, and it is only by becoming conscious of the divine nature in its essence that one will be able to have a conception of what the divine nature will be in the manifestation. Yet those who have realised this consciousness in themselves are usually more anxious to become the superman than to give a description of him." (CWM 12: 99–100)

4. The higher race will replace sentimental pity with enlightened compassion, providing a true remedy for suffering

"… 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)

5. Until the Superman can come, aspire for the most beautiful, noble, truest, purest and most luminous qualities to be realised in oneself

"Until the superman can come in person to show man what his true nature is, it might be wise for every human being of goodwill to become conscious of what he can conceive as the most beautiful, the most noble, the truest and purest, the most luminous and best, and to aspire that this conception may be realised in himself for the greatest good of the world and men." (CWM 12: 100–101)

III—How Creation Happened in the Form of a Story

1.

"There is a very old tradition which narrates this. I am going to tell you the story as one does to children, for in this way you will understand:

One day 'God' decided to exteriorise himself, objectivise himself, in order to have the joy of knowing himself in detail. So, first of all, he emanated his consciousness (that is to say, he manifested his consciousness) by ordering this consciousness to realise a universe. This consciousness began by emanating four beings, four individualities which were indeed altogether very high beings, of the highest Reality. They were the being of consciousness, the being of love (of Ananda rather), the being of life and the being of light and knowledge—but consciousness and light are the same thing. There we are then: consciousness, love and Ananda, life and truth—truth, that's the exact word. And naturally, they were supremely powerful beings, you understand. They were what are called in that tradition the first emanations, that is, the first formations. And each one became very conscious of its qualities, its power, its capacities, its possibilities, and, suddenly forgot each in its own way that it was only an emanation and an incarnation of the Supreme. And so this is what

happened: when light or Consciousness separated from the divine Consciousness, that is, when it began to think it was the divine Consciousness and that there was nothing other than itself, it suddenly became obscurity and inconscience. And when Life thought that all life was in itself and that there was nothing else but its life and that it did not depend at all upon the Supreme, then its life became death. And when Truth thought that it contained all truth, and that there was no other truth than itself, this Truth became falsehood. And when love or Ananda was convinced that it was the supreme Ananda and that there was no other than itself and its felicity, it became suffering. And that is how the world, which was to have been so beautiful, became so ugly. And that is how the world, which was to have been so beautiful, became so ugly. Now, that consciousness (if you like to call it the Divine Mother, the Supreme Consciousness), when she saw this she was very disturbed, you may be sure, she said to herself: 'This has really not succeeded.' So she turned back to the Divine, to God, the Supreme, and she asked him to come to her aid. She said to him: 'This is what has happened. Now what is to be done?' He said: 'Begin again, but try to manage in such a way that the beings do not become so independent! ... They must remain in contact with you, and through you with me.' And it was thus that she created the gods, who were quite docile and not so proud, and who began the

creation of the world. But as the others had come before them, at every step the gods met the others. And it was in this way that the world changed into a battlefield, a place of war, strife, suffering, darkness and all the rest, and for each new creation the gods had to fight with the others who had gone ahead: they had preceded them, they had plunged headlong into matter; and they had created all this disorder and the gods had to put straight all this confusion. That is where the gods came from. They are the second emanations." (CWM 5: 371–372)

2.

"I am going to tell you one, very succinctly. Don't take it as a gospel! Take it rather... as a story [the story of involution].

When the Supreme decided to exteriorise Himself in order to be able to see Himself, …

… And at first four Beings were emanated to start this universal development which was to be the progressive objectivisation of all that is potentially contained in the Supreme. These Beings were, in the principle of their existence: Consciousness and Light, Life, Bliss and Love, and Truth.

You can easily imagine that they had a sense of great power, great strength, of something tremendous, for they were essentially the very principle of these things. Besides, they had full freedom of choice, for this

creation was to be Freedom itself.... As soon as they set to work—they had their own conception of how it had to be done—being totally free, they chose to do it independently. Instead of taking the attitude of servant and instrument of which Sri Aurobindo speaks in what I have just read to you, they naturally took the attitude of the master, and this mistake—as I may call it—was the first cause, the essential cause of all the disorder in the universe. As soon as there was separation—for that is the essential cause, separation—as soon as there was separation between the Supreme and what had been emanated, Consciousness changed into inconscience, Light into darkness, Love into hatred, Bliss into suffering, Life into death and Truth into falsehood. And they proceeded with their creations independently, in separation and disorder.

… The creative Force which had emanated these four Beings, essentially for the creation of the world, witnessed what was happening, and turning to the Supreme she prayed for the remedy and the cure of the evil that had been done.

Then she was given the command to precipitate her Consciousness into this inconscience, her Love into this suffering, and her Truth into this falsehood. And a greater consciousness, a more total love, a more perfect truth than what had been emanated at first, plunged, so to say, into the horror of Matter in order to awaken in it

consciousness, love and truth, and to begin the movement of Redemption which was to bring the material universe back to its supreme origin." (CWM 9: 206–208)

IV—Why a Plunge Should Ever Have Been Undertaken by the Supreme Consciousness, Bringing Suffering

1. Why this plunge of supreme Consciousness was taken into the void of unconsciousness

"To ask why this plunge [of supreme Consciousness and Being into an apparent void of insentience {asleep unconsciousness}, inconscience, non-existence] was taken at all, why such an evolution slow, gratuitous, painful should ever have been undertaken is natural for man struggling painfully with his own transience, ignorance and suffering inevitable consequences of that plunge or fall but from the cosmic point of view irrelevant and otiose [futile]." (CWSA 12: 224–225)

2. Without this plunge, the creation of that phenomenon of cosmic energy in matter would have been impossible

"In order that this evolution might be, an implacable plunge of supreme Consciousness and Being into an apparent void of insentience, inconscience, non-existence was inevitable; for without that plunge, immergence, seeming yet effective annihilation [in] its opposite the

creation of that phenomenon of cosmic Energy which we call Matter would have been impossible." (CWSA 12: 224)

3. In unconsciousness is present the involved and latent delight of existence

"Yet however effective this appearance is only an appearance. In the void of that Non-Existence all the powers of being are held involved and latent; in the impenetrable darkness of that Inconscience all the possibilities of consciousness lie ready to be evolved; in that insentience [asleep unconsciousness] is a drowned Delight of Existence which emerging in the contradictory figures of pleasure and pain can struggle upwards towards cosmic expression of its own truth of the Bliss that supports all things." (CWSA 12: 224)

4. This plunge was undertaken because the Spirit was afraid of no possibility of manifestation, so readily sanctioned its will towards manifest existence

"A possibility was there in the Infinite and outlined itself for manifestation, the lines of an evolutionary world amidst the numberless possibility or numbered reality of various universes, and it was undertaken because the Spirit in things is afraid of no possibility of itself but is

rather ready to sanction all by its will towards manifest existence. To the Cosmic Spirit which sees things as a whole, the working out of this universe or any universe is self-justified, the obscure labour of the emergence no less than the glory of its completion and final perfection in a yet unattained light, bliss and greatness." (CWSA 12: 225)

5. Our will in terrestrial existence must be to come out of pain and pleasure and gain possession of the cosmic bliss of existence

"At any rate into this world of evolution something of the eternal spirit has thrown itself, with all in it that consented to the descent and to fulfil the world, not to escape from it, is the deepest meaning of the Spirit and Godhead within us and the universe.

This then must be our will in terrestrial existence—being mind in matter to grow into the Spirit, being man-animal to emerge into the Godhead, to expand out of our limited sense of existence into freedom and infinite wideness, out of the half figure of consciousness we have realised to be illumined into true consciousness, out of weakness to realise divine Mastery, out of the dual experience of pain and pleasure to emerge into possession of the cosmic Bliss of existence, out of the dull chrysalis of our limited selves to flower into oneness with

the Divine Self that we are. For this is not an egoistic will in us but the meaning of the Divine Inhabitant for which he has undertaken bodily life and terrestrial existence." (CWSA 12: 225)

6. The aim of terrestrial existence is to reveal in Matter, in figure and body, what was once self-held only in an eternal, unembodied self and spirit

"In the Inconscience in which it has involved itself, these powers, this nature seem not only to be hidden but contradicted; cast into their own opposites they emerge with difficulty and labour at first in flickers and faint glimpses, then growing into a better but still much diminished figure. But the evolution cannot be considered at an end until these diminished figures growing more and more free, developed, powerful arrive at their own complete fulfilment, revelation of their truth, native perfection, beauty and greatness. This is the aim of terrestrial existence—to reveal in Matter, in Time-Space, in figure and body what was once self-held only in an eternal unembodied self and spirit." (CWSA 12: 224)

V—In Creation, Suffering Was a Terrible but Reparable Accident

1. Suffering was not foreseen at the beginning of creation

"I have the impression, a very powerful impression, that a practical joker came and spoilt the game and made it into something dramatic, and this practical joker is obviously the cause of the division and the ignorance which is the result of this division, and of the suffering which is the result of ignorance. Indeed, in spite of all the spiritual traditions, it is difficult to conceive that this state of division, ignorance and suffering was foreseen at the beginning of creation. In spite of everything, one doesn't like to think that it could have been foreseen. Indeed, I refuse to believe it. I call it an accident—a rather terrible accident, but still, you see, it is especially terrible to the human consciousness; for the universal consciousness, it may only be quite a reparable accident. And after all, when it has been set right, we shall even be able to recall it and say, 'Ah! it has given us something we wouldn't have had otherwise.' But we must first wait for it to be put right." (CWM 9: 11)

2. When suffering appeared unexpectedly, the divine Consciousness immediately plunged into the inconscience as Love

"Anyway, I don't know if there are people who say that it was foreseen and willed, but I tell you it was neither foreseen nor willed, and this is precisely why when it happened, quite unexpectedly, immediately something else sprang forth from the Source, which probably would not have manifested if this accident had not taken place. If Delight had remained Delight, conceived as Delight, and everything had come about in Delight and Union instead of in division, there would never have been any need for the divine Consciousness to plunge into the inconscience as Love." (CWM 9: 11)

3. When one has entered into Union and Delight, one may say that one has gained an experience that one would never have had

"So, when one sees this from very far and from high above, one says, 'After all, something has perhaps been gained from it.' But one must see it from a great distance and a great height to be able to say that. Or rather, when it is left far behind, when one has gone beyond this state, entered into Union and Delight, when division and inconscience and suffering have disappeared, then one

may very wisely say, 'Ah, yes, we have gained an experience we would never have had otherwise'.**"** (CWM 9: 11)

4. It is really necessary that things in the world should change and the acute state of sickness should disappear so that we can say, "Yes, we have benefited from it"

"But the experience must be behind, we must not be right in the midst of it. For, even for someone who—this is something I know—even for someone who has come out of this state, who lives in the consciousness of Oneness, for whom ignorance is something external, no longer something intimate and painful, even for that person it is impossible to look on the suffering of all those who have not come out of it with a smile of indifference. That seems impossible to me. Therefore, it is really necessary that things in the world should change and the acute state of sickness should disappear, so that we can say, 'Ah! yes, we have benefited by it.' It is true that something has been gained, but it is a very costly gain." (CWM 9: 11–12)

5. Nirvana is a very radical way of escaping from the consequences of an ignorant manifestation

"That is why, I believe, because of that, so many initiates and sages have been attracted by the solution of the void, of Nirvana, for this is obviously a very radical way of escaping from the consequences of an ignorant manifestation." (CWM 9: 12)

6. Sri Aurobindo's superior solution is to change this manifestation into divine reality

"Only, the solution of changing this manifestation into a true, truly divine reality is a far superior solution. And this is what we want to attempt now, with a certitude of succeeding one day or another, for, in spite of everything, despite everything, what is true is eternally true, and what is true in essence must necessarily become true in the realisation, one day or another. Sri Aurobindo told us that we had taken the first step on the path and that the time had come to accomplish the work, therefore one has only to set out." (CWM 9: 12)

7. The world suffers because it is not receptive to the Divine Love

"*Your hands are open to give everything, but I can only receive a small part of it because I am not receptive enough.*

This is the exact image of the state of the world which suffers because it is not receptive, when it could live in beatitude if it would open to the Divine Love.

But there is a remedy:

Sincere and constant aspiration." (CWM 16: 365)

VI—Once the Conditions of the Cosmos Were Laid Down and the Involution into Nescience Was Accepted, a Division Took Place between the Higher and the Lower

1.

"It is a great error to suppose that the Divine Will is always acting openly in the world. All that happens is not, in fact, divine: the Supreme Will is distorted in the manifestation owing to the combination of lower forces which translate it. They are the medium which falsifies its impetus and gives it an undivine result. If all that happened were indeed the flawless translation of it, how could you account for the distortions of the world?... Not that the Divine Will could not have caused the cosmic Ignorance. It is omnipotent and all possibilities are inherent in it: it can work out anything of which it sees the secret necessity in its original vision. And the first cause of the world is, of course, the Divine, though we must take care not to adjudge this fact mentally according to our petty ethical values. But once the conditions of the cosmos were laid down and the involution into nescience accepted as the basis of a progressive manifestation of the Divine out of all that seemed its very opposite, there took place a sort of division between the Higher and the Lower. The history of the world became a battle between the True and the

False, in which the details are not all direct representations of the Divine's progressive action but rather distortions of it owing to the mass of resistance offered by the inferior Nature. If there were no such resistance, there would be nothing whatever to conquer in the world, for the world would be harmonious, a constant passage from one perfection to another instead of the conflict which it is—a game of hazards and various possibilities in which the Divine faces real opposition, real difficulty and often real temporary defeat on the way to the final victory. It is just this reality of the whole play that makes it no mere jest. The Divine Will actually suffers distortion the moment it touches the hostile forces in the Ignorance. Hence we must never slacken our efforts to change the world and bring about a different order. We must be vigilant to co-operate with the Divine and not placidly think that whatever happens is always the best. All depends upon the personal attitude. If, in the presence of circumstances that are on the point of occurring, you take the highest possible attitude—that is to say, if you put your consciousness in contact with the highest consciousness within your reach—you can be absolutely certain that in such a case what happens is the best that can happen to you. But as soon as you fall from this consciousness and come down into a lower state, then it is evident that what happens cannot be the best,

since you are not in your best consciousness. As Sri Aurobindo once said, 'What happened had to happen, but it could have been much better.' Because the person to whom it happened was not in his highest consciousness, there was no other consequence possible; but if he had brought about a descent of the Divine, then, even if the situation in general had been inevitable, it would have turned out in a different way. What makes all the difference is how you receive the impulsion of the Divine Will.

You must rise very high before you can meet this Will in its plenary splendour of authenticity; not before you open your lower nature to it can it begin to manifest in terms of the Truth. You must, therefore, refrain from applying the merely Nietzschean standard of temporary success in order to differentiate the Divine from the undivine. For, life is a battlefield in which the Divine succeeds in detail only when the lower nature is receptive to its impulsions instead of siding with the hostile forces. And even then the test is not so much external as internal: a divine movement cannot be measured by apparent signs—it is a certain kind of vibration that indicates its presence—external tests are of no avail, since even what is in appearance a failure may be in fact a divine achievement.... What you have to do is to give yourself up to the Grace of the Divine; for, it is under the

form of Grace, of Love, that it has consented to uplift the universe after the first involution was established. With the Divine Love is the supreme power of Transformation. It has this power because it is for the sake of Transformation that it has given itself to the world and manifested everywhere. Not only has it infused itself into man, but also into all the atoms of the most obscure Matter in order to bring the world back to the original Truth. It is this descent that is called the supreme sacrifice in the Indian scriptures. But it is a sacrifice only from the human point of view; the human mind thinks that if it had to do such a thing it would be a tremendous sacrifice. But the Divine cannot really be diminished, its infinite essence can never become less, no matter what 'sacrifices' are made.... The moment you open to the Divine Love, you also receive its power of Transformation. But it is not in terms of quantity that you can measure it; what is essential is the true contact; for, you will find that the true contact with it is sufficient to fill at once the whole of your being." (CWM 3: 169–172)

VII—Even After Witnessing Suffering, What Pushes Humanity to Affirm That All Is Secretly Divine

1. If all is secretly Divine, it looks inconsistent with the sorrow and suffering of the world

"All begins from the Divine, from the Eternal, from the Infinite, all abides in it alone and by it alone, all ends or culminates in the divine Eternal and Infinite. This is the first postulate indispensable for our spiritual seeking—for on no other base can we found the highest knowledge and the highest life.

All time moves in the Eternal; all space is spread in the Infinite; all creatures and creations live by that in them which is Divine. This is patently true of an inner spiritual but also proves in the end to be true of this outer space and time. It is known to our inmost being that it lives because it is part of the Divine, but it is true also of the external and phenomenal creature compounded of ignorant Mind, blind life and subconscious Matter.

A secret Self is the Alpha and Omega of this manifested existence; it is also the constant term, the omnipresent x into which all things resolve separately or together and which is their sum, their constituting material and their essence. All here is secretly the Divine, all is the Eternal, all is the Infinite.

But this secret truth of things is contradicted by the world's external appearances, it is denied by all the facts placed before us by our mind and senses, inconsistent with the sorrow and suffering of the world, incompatible with the imperfection of living beings and the unchangeable inconscience of things." (CWSA 12: 179)

2. Undivine prevails over the little that is divine in the world

"For on the surface of our consciousness and all around us there is only the temporal and transient, only [the] confined and finite. What seems largest to us finds its limit, what we dreamed to be enduring comes to an end; even this vast universe with its masses of worlds upon worlds which seemed to stretch into infinity is convicted in the end of being only a boundless finite. Man claiming to be a divine soul and an all-discovering intellect is brought up short by Nature's rude proof of his ignorance and incompetence and exhibits constantly in his thoughts the proneness to self-confident error and in his feelings and acts the petty faultiness, meanness, and darkness or suddenly the abysses of falsehood or foulness or cruelty of his nature. In the management of his world the much that is undivine prevails easily over the little that is divine or they are inextricably mixed together. The ideal fails in practice, religion degenerates quickly into a settled

sectarian fanaticism or formality, the triumphant good turns into an organised evil. The Christian doctrine of the fall, the Indian idea of the wandering of the Soul in a cosmic illusion or the sceptic affirmation of an inconscient material Nature producing the freak of consciousness seems often to be the kernel of the whole matter." (CWSA 12: 179–180)

3. Then what compels us to acknowledge that all here is divine

"What then pushes the mind to affirm it? what compels us to admit a seeing of things which is in conflict with our outer seeing and experience?" (CWSA 12: 179)

4. If we delve deep enough into ourselves, we find the immortal veiled Divine, the Soul

"And yet if we go deep enough into ourselves, we strike against something valid that proves to be a veiled divine element which affirms its immortality, Soul. If we go beyond our embodied mind and senses we break suddenly into something permanent that feels itself to be eternal and infinite, that cannot see itself as anything else and we also cannot conceive of it as anything else, an infinite Self, an eternal Spirit." (CWSA 12: 180)

5. In our most secret essence, we possess the instinct and intuition of the Divine

"Moreover in our most secret essence we are convinced of perfection or of perfectibility—perfection in our deepest spiritual being, perfectibility in our nature; we have the instinct and intuition of the Divine." (CWSA 12: 180)

6. Not to limit ourselves to outer evidence Not to Limit Ourselves to Outer Evidence

"In all this questing by one end or the other we cannot get beyond ourselves and it is better then to look into the inner side of ourselves,—why should we limit ourselves only to our responses to an outer evidence? Let us explore ourselves and not only our sense or perception of what is around us. And in ourselves let us look not only at our surfaces but at the inner and the inmost of our being and nature." (CWSA 12: 181)

7. Self-knowledge pursued far enough reveals, beyond mind and beyond sense, a beyond-life; the limited transcends into the illimitable

"This self-knowledge pursued far enough shows us a deeper than the surface mind and a deeper than the physical sense, a profounder than the outward life. It

shows us also a Beyond Mind and Beyond-Sense, a Beyond-Life; the limited passes into [the] illimitable. If there were not this capacity of research, we would have to be content with an unsatisfied agnosticism; but the means is there by which we can know ourselves and this Alpha and X and Omega of things or if not absolutely It at any rate its status and its dynamis, the law of its being and the law of its nature quite as deeply and more deeply than Science can show us the law and process of the physical universe." (CWSA 12: 181)

8. This spiritual search and knowledge lead us beyond the phenomenon, bringing us to the Divine—eternal and infinite

"For the moment let us affirm only this result that this spiritual search and knowledge leads us beyond the phenomenon which apparently contradicts it to that which beyond the phenomenon brings us to the Divine Eternal and Infinite." (CWSA 12: 181)

VIII—God Suffers When You Suffer, as There Is No Difference between God and His Creation

1.

"That is the first argument, that is the theory. The Divine is all-powerful, he can do whatever he likes; therefore he does not need anybody's help. And if you push your idea sufficiently far, you will see that if the Divine is truly all-powerful in this world and does always whatever he wants, well, I tell you, he is the greatest monster in the universe! Because One who is all powerful and makes the world such as it is, looking with a smile at people suffering and miserable, and finding that all right, I would call a monster. … Now, as you have a little more philosophical mind, I shall teach you how to come out of the difficulty. But, first of all, you must understand that that idea is a childish idea. I simply call on your common sense. You make of your Divine a person, because that way you understand him better. You make of him a person. And then this person has organised something (the earth, it is too big, it is difficult to understand—take anything else) and then this thing the Divine has organised with the full power to do exactly as he likes. And in this thing—that he has made with the full power to do as he likes—there is ignorance, stupidity, bad will, fear, jealousy, pride, wickedness, and also suffering, illness, grief, all the pains; and a set of people who

cannot say that they have perhaps more than a few minutes of happiness in the whole day and the rest of it is a neutral condition, passing by like a thing that's dead—and you call that a creation!... I call it something like a hell! …

But there is a way out of the difficulty. (*To a child*) Do you know it, you? Yes, yes, you know it! You will see all these conceptions and this idea that you have are based upon one thing, an entity that you call God and a world that you call his creation, and you believe these are two different things, one having made the other and the other being under the first, being the expression of what the first has made. Well, that is the initial error. If you could feel deeply that there is no division between that something you call God and this something you call his creation, if you said: 'It is exactly the same thing' and if you could feel that what you call God (perhaps it is only a word), what you call God suffers when you suffer, he does not know when you do not know; and that it is through this creation, little by little, step by step, that he finds himself again, unites with himself, is realising himself, expressing himself, and it is not at all something he wanted in an arbitrary way or made like an autocrat, but that it is the growing expression, developing more and more, of a consciousness that is objectifying itself to itself.... Then there is no other thing but the sense of a collective advancing towards a more total realisation, a

self-awareness of knowledge-consciousness—no other thing but that, a progressive self-awareness of knowledge-consciousness in a total unity which will reproduce integrally the Original Consciousness.

That changes the problem.

… But if you had by your side someone to tell you: instead of that, instead of lighting a candle and kneeling down before it with your hands folded, light a flame in your heart and then have a great aspiration towards 'something more beautiful, more true, more noble, better than all that I know. I ask that from tomorrow I begin to know all these things, all that I cannot do I begin to do and every day a little more.' And then, if you throw yourself out a little, if, for one reason or another, you were put in the presence of much misery in the world, if you have friends who are unhappy or relatives who suffer or you meet any kind of difficulties, then you ask that the whole consciousness might be raised *all together* towards that perfection which must manifest and that all this ignorance that has made the world so unhappy might be changed into an enlightened knowledge and all this bad will be illumined and transformed into benevolence. And then as far as one can, as far as one understands, one wishes it with all one's heart; and indeed that can take the form of a prayer and one can ask—ask of what?—ask of that which knows, ask of that which can, ask of all that is greater and stronger than oneself, to help so that it

may be thus. And how beautiful those prayers would be!" (CWM 5: 160–163)

2.

"*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." (CWM 6: 143–144)

3.

"... at a certain moment the problem became very acute, and then it was as though the divine Consciousness told me: 'In all this suffering, it is I who am suffering'—the Consciousness, isn't it?—'it is I who am suffering, but in another manner than that of yours.' I do not know how to say it, it was like this, the impression that the divine Consciousness experienced what for us is suffering; it existed—it existed for the divine Consciousness—but in a different way than for our own consciousness; and then there was an attempt to make one understand the consciousness of all at the same time, simultaneously, everything (one might simply say to express oneself): suffering, the most acute disorder, and Harmony, the most perfect Ananda—the two together, experienced together. Naturally that changes the nature of the suffering." (CWM 11: 141)

4.

"No, I now perceive that these sufferings come from the very imperfection of Matter which, in its disorder and crudeness, is unfit to manifest thee; and thou art the very first to suffer from it, to bewail it, thou art the first to toil and strive in thy ardent desire to change disorder into order, suffering into happiness, discord into harmony." (CWM 2: 21)

IX—Far from Being a Torturer, the Divine Is the Love that Guides through the Quickest Routes in a Progressive March towards Perfection

"**27 – God is a great and cruel Torturer because He loves. You do not understand this, because you have not seen and played with Krishna.** [Thoughts and Aphorisms]

What does 'to play with Krishna' mean? What does 'God is a great and cruel Torturer' mean?

Krishna is the immanent Divine, the Divine Presence in everyone and in all things. He is also, sovereignly, the aspect of Delight and Love of the Supreme; he is the smiling tenderness and the playful gaiety; he is at once the player, the play and all his playmates. And as both the game and its results are wholly known, conceived, willed, organised and played consciously in their entirety, there can be room for nothing but the delight of the play. Thus to see Krishna means to find the inner Godhead, to play with Krishna means to be identified with the inner Godhead and to share in his consciousness. When you achieve this state, you enter immediately into the bliss of the divine play; and the more complete the identification, the more perfect the state.

But if some corner of the consciousness keeps the ordinary perception, the ordinary understanding, the ordinary sensation, then you see the suffering of others, you find the play that causes so much suffering very cruel and you conclude that the God who takes pleasure in such a play must be a terrible Torturer; but on the other hand, when you have had the experience of identification with the Divine, you cannot forget the immense, the wonderful love which he puts into his play, and you understand that it is the limitation of our vision that makes us judge in this way, and that far from being a voluntary Torturer, he is the great beneficent love that guides the world and men, by the quickest routes, in their progressive march towards perfection, a perfection which, moreover, is always relative and is always being surpassed.

But a day will come when this apparent suffering will no longer be required to stimulate the advance and when progress can be made more and more in harmony and delight." (CWM 10: 51–52)

X—If Existence Is Infinite Self-Delight, How to Account for Grief, Suffering and Pain

1. Eternal existence's consciousness is bliss

"This primary, ultimate and eternal Existence, as seen by the Vedantins, … is a conscious existence the very term of whose being, the very term of whose consciousness is bliss." (CWSA 21: 98)

2. In absolute existence, there can be no suffering, no negation of delight

"As in absolute existence there can be no nothingness, no night of inconscience, no deficiency, that is to say, no failure of Force,—for if there were any of these things, it would not be absolute,—so also there can be no suffering, no negation of delight. Absoluteness of conscious existence is illimitable bliss of conscious existence; the two are only different phrases for the same thing. All illimitableness, all infinity, all absoluteness is pure delight." (CWSA 21: 98–99)

3. If the world is an expression of Sachchidananda, how are we to account for the presence of grief, suffering and pain

"For if the world be an expression of Sachchidananda, not only of existence that is conscious-force,—for that can easily be admitted,—but of existence that is also infinite self-delight, how are we to account for the universal presence of grief, of suffering, of pain?" (CWSA 21: 100)

4. Not to be deceived by grief and pain, for appearances can never be trusted till the secrets behind them are fathomed

"That which strikes us most saliently & leaps on us fiercely at every turn, is grief & pain, not delight; … But this undeniable existence stands before us rather as an inextricable confusion of pleasure & pain than as synonymous with delight; ... Be not deceived, answers the Vedantin; appearances can never be trusted till the secrets behind them are fathomed. To the eye's unvarying experience the sun is a globe of fire that voyages round its worshipped earth; generations so conceived it & would have mocked at the truth; these solid appearances are an assemblage of gases; the colour of a rose is a brilliant deceit of the vision. Interrogate consciousness to find what it is or holds & unconsciousness to discover its secrets." (CWSA 12: 85–86)

5. The sum of the pleasure of existence far exceeds the sum of the pain of existence

a.

"For this world appears to us rather as a world of suffering than as a world of the delight of existence. Certainly, that view of the world is an exaggeration, an error of perspective. If we regard it dispassionately and with a sole view to accurate and unemotional appreciation, we shall find that the sum of the pleasure of existence far exceeds the sum of the pain of existence,—appearances and individual cases to the contrary notwithstanding,—and that the active or passive, surface or underlying pleasure of existence is the normal state of nature, pain a contrary occurrence temporarily suspending or overlaying that normal state. But for that very reason the lesser sum of pain affects us more intensely and often looms larger than the greater sum of pleasure; precisely because the latter is normal, we do not treasure it, hardly even observe it unless it intensifies into some acuter form of itself, into a wave of happiness, a crest of joy or ecstasy. It is these things that we call delight and seek and the normal satisfaction of existence which is always there regardless of event and particular cause or object, affects us as something neutral which is neither pleasure nor pain. It is there, a great practical fact, for without it there would not be the universal and

overpowering instinct of self-preservation, but it is not what we seek and therefore we do not enter it into our balance of emotional and sensational profit and loss. In that balance we enter only positive pleasures on one side and discomfort and pain on the other; pain affects us more intensely because it is abnormal to our being, contrary to our natural tendency and is experienced as an outrage on our existence, an offence and external attack on what we are and seek to be." (CWSA 21: 100)

b.

"*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".*

That is when you look at what the world ought to be and lay stress on what it should be. The idealist's question is why should there be pain at all, even if it is outweighed by the fundamental pleasure of existence. The real crux is why should inadequacy, limit and suffering come across this natural pleasure of life. It does not mean that life is essentially miserable in its very nature." (CWSA 35: 122)

6. If all being is Sachchidananda, how can pain and suffering exist at all?

"Nevertheless the abnormality of pain or its greater or lesser sum does not affect the philosophical issue; greater or less, its mere presence constitutes the whole problem. All being Sachchidananda, how can pain and suffering at all exist? This, the real problem, is often farther confused by a false issue starting from the idea of a personal extra-cosmic God and a partial issue, the ethical difficulty.

Sachchidananda, it may be reasoned, is God, is a conscious Being who is the author of existence; how then can God have created a world in which He inflicts suffering on His creatures, sanctions pain, permits evil? God being All-Good, who created pain and evil? If we say that pain is a trial and an ordeal, we do not solve the moral problem, we arrive at an immoral or nonmoral God,—an excellent world-mechanist [*philosophy which says all changes in the world are effect of merely mechanical forces*] perhaps, a cunning psychologist, but not a God of Good and of Love whom we can worship, only a God of Might to whose law we must submit or whose caprice we may hope to propitiate. For one who invents torture as a means of test or ordeal, stands convicted either of deliberate cruelty or of moral insensibility and, if a moral being at all, is inferior to the highest instinct of his own creatures. And if to escape this moral difficulty, we say that pain is an inevitable result and natural punishment of moral evil,—an explanation which will not even square with the facts of life unless we

admit the theory of Karma and rebirth by which the soul suffers now for antenatal sins in other bodies,—we still do not escape the very root of the ethical problem,—who created or why or whence was created that moral evil which entails the punishment of pain and suffering? And seeing that moral evil is in reality a form of mental disease or ignorance, who or what created this law or inevitable connection which punishes a mental disease or act of ignorance by a recoil so terrible, by tortures often so extreme and monstrous? The inexorable law of Karma is irreconcilable with a supreme moral and personal Deity, and therefore the clear logic of Buddha denied the existence of any free and all-governing personal God; all personality he declared to be a creation of ignorance and subject to Karma." (CWSA 21: 101)

7. This difficulty arises only if we assume the existence of an extra-cosmic God

"In truth, the difficulty thus sharply presented arises only if we assume the existence of an extra-cosmic personal God, not Himself the universe, one who has created good and evil, pain and suffering for His creatures, but Himself stands above and unaffected by them, watching, ruling, doing His will with a suffering and struggling world or, if not doing His will, if allowing the world to be driven by an inexorable law, unhelped by Him or inefficiently helped,

then not God, not omnipotent, not all good and all-loving. On no theory of an extra-cosmic moral God, can evil and suffering be explained,—the creation of evil and suffering,—except by an unsatisfactory subterfuge which avoids the question at issue instead of answering it or a plain or implied Manicheanism which practically annuls the Godhead in attempting to justify its ways or excuse its works." (CWSA 21: 101–102)

8. Sachchidananda of the Vedanta is one existence without a second; all that is, is He

"But such a God is not the Vedantic Sachchidananda. Sachchidananda of the Vedanta is one existence without a second; all that is, is He." (CWSA 21: 102)

9. If then suffering exists, it is He who bears the suffering in the creature in whom He has embodied Himself

"If then evil and suffering exist, it is He that bears the evil and suffering in the creature in whom He has embodied Himself. The problem then changes entirely. The question is no longer how came God to create for His creatures a suffering and evil of which He is Himself incapable and therefore immune, but how came the sole and infinite Existence-Consciousness-Bliss to admit into itself that

which is not bliss, that which seems to be its positive negation." (CWSA 21: 102)

10. The ethical difficulty is this: if the All-Delightful Being is all-good and all-loving, how can suffering exist in Sachchidananda

"Still the ethical difficulty may be brought back in a modified form; All-Delight being necessarily all-good and all love, how can evil and suffering exist in Sachchidananda, since he is not mechanical existence, but free and conscious being, free to condemn and reject evil and suffering? We have to recognise that the issue so stated is also a false issue because it applies the terms of a partial statement as if they were applicable to the whole." (CWSA 21: 102)

11. We do not live in an ethical world and cannot impose an ethical meaning on the entire nature

"We have to recognise, if we thus view the whole, not limiting ourselves to the human difficulty and the human standpoint, that we do not live in an ethical world. The attempt of human thought to force an ethical meaning into the whole of Nature is one of those acts of wilful and obstinate self-confusion, one of those pathetic attempts

of the human being to read himself, his limited habitual human self into all things and judge them from the standpoint he has personally evolved, which most effectively prevent him from arriving at real knowledge and complete sight. Material Nature is not ethical; the law which governs it is a co-ordination of fixed habits which take no cognisance of good and evil, but only of force that creates, force that arranges and preserves, force that disturbs and destroys impartially, non-ethically, according to the secret Will in it, according to the mute satisfaction of that Will in its own self-formations and self-dissolutions. Animal or vital Nature is also non-ethical, although as it progresses it manifests the crude material out of which the higher animal evolves the ethical impulse. We do not blame the tiger because it slays and devours its prey any more than we blame the storm because it destroys or the fire because it tortures and kills; neither does the conscious-force in the storm, the fire or the tiger blame or condemn itself. Blame and condemnation, or rather self-blame and self-condemnation, are the beginning of true ethics. When we blame others without applying the same law to ourselves, we are not speaking with a true ethical judgment, but only applying the language ethics has evolved for us to an emotional impulse of recoil from or dislike of that which displeases or hurts us.

This recoil or dislike is the primary origin of ethics, but is not itself ethical. The fear of the deer for the tiger, the rage of the strong creature against its assailant is a vital recoil of the individual delight of existence from that which threatens it. In the progress of the mentality it refines itself into repugnance, dislike, disapproval. Disapproval of that which threatens and hurts us, approval of that which flatters and satisfies refine into the conception of good and evil to oneself, to the community, to others than ourselves, to other communities than ours, and finally into the general approval of good, the general disapproval of evil. But, throughout, the fundamental nature of the thing remains the same." (CWSA 21: 103–104)

12. Man desires self-development, and that is his fundamental delight

"Man desires self-expression, self-development, in other words, the progressing play in himself of the conscious force of existence; that is his fundamental delight. Whatever hurts that self-expression, self-development, satisfaction of his progressing self, is for him evil; whatever helps, confirms, raises, aggrandises, ennobles it is his good. Only, his conception of the self-development changes, becomes higher and wider, begins to exceed his

limited personality, to embrace others, to embrace all in its scope." (CWSA 21: 104)

13. Ethics is a stage in evolution

"In other words, ethics is a stage in evolution. That which is common to all stages is the urge of Sachchidananda towards self-expression. This urge is at first non-ethical, then infra-ethical in the animal, then in the intelligent animal even anti-ethical for it permits us to approve hurt done to others which we disapprove when done to ourselves. In this respect man even now is only half-ethical. And just as all below us is infra-ethical, so there may be that above us whither we shall eventually arrive, which is supra-ethical, has no need of ethics. The ethical impulse and attitude, so all-important to humanity, is a means by which it struggles out of the lower harmony and universality based upon inconscience and broken up by Life into individual discords towards a higher harmony and universality based upon conscient oneness with all existences. Arriving at that goal, this means will no longer be necessary or even possible, since the qualities and oppositions on which it depends will naturally dissolve and disappear in the final reconciliation." (CWSA 21: 104)

14. The ethical standpoint applies only temporarily, so it cannot apply to the total solution

"If, then, the ethical standpoint applies only to a temporary though all-important passage from one universality to another, we cannot apply it to the total solution of the problem of the universe, but can only admit it as one element in that solution. To do otherwise is to run into the peril of falsifying all the facts of the universe, all the meaning of the evolution behind and beyond us in order to suit a temporary outlook and a half-evolved view of the utility of things. The world has three layers, infra-ethical, ethical and supra-ethical. We have to find that which is common to all; for only so can we resolve the problem." (CWSA 21: 104–105)

15. In the passage to higher forms, the phenomenon of pain and suffering intervenes

"That which is common to all is, we have seen, the satisfaction of conscious-force of existence developing itself into forms and seeking in that development its delight. From that satisfaction or delight of self-existence it evidently began; for it is that which is normal to it, to which it clings, which it makes its base; but it seeks new forms of itself and in the passage to higher forms there

intervenes the phenomenon of pain and suffering which seems to contradict the fundamental nature of its being. This and this alone is the root-problem." (CWSA 21: 105)

16. In the process of becoming, the delight of being takes different forms of pleasure and pain

"Let us return, then, to our original conception of Sachchidananda and see whether on that foundation a completer solution is not possible.

We must first make it clear to ourselves that just as when we speak of universal consciousness we mean something different from, more essential and wider than the waking mental consciousness of the human being, so also when we speak of universal delight of existence we mean something different from, more essential and wider than the ordinary emotional and sensational pleasure of the individual human creature. Pleasure, joy and delight, as man uses the words, are limited and occasional movements which depend on certain habitual causes and emerge, like their opposites pain and grief which are equally limited and occasional movements, from a background other than themselves. Delight of being is universal, illimitable and self-existent, not dependent on particular causes, the background of all backgrounds, from which pleasure, pain and other more neutral

experiences emerge. When delight of being seeks to realise itself as delight of becoming, it moves in the movement of force and itself takes different forms of movement of which pleasure and pain are positive and negative currents." (CWSA 21: 105–106)

17. In the becoming, the delight of the mind and life moves between pleasure and pain

"[Delight is] Subconscient in Matter, superconscient beyond Mind this delight seeks in Mind and Life to realise itself by emergence in the becoming, in the increasing self-consciousness of the movement. Its first phenomena are dual and impure, move between the poles of pleasure and pain, but it aims at its self-revelation in the purity of a supreme delight of being which is self-existent and independent of objects and causes. Just as Sachchidananda moves towards the realisation of the universal existence in the individual and of the form-exceeding consciousness in the form of body and mind, so it moves towards the realisation of universal, self-existent and objectless delight in the flux of particular experiences and objects. Those objects we now seek as stimulating causes of a transient pleasure and satisfaction; free, possessed of self, we shall not seek but shall possess them as reflectors rather than causes of a delight which eternally exists." (CWSA 21: 106)

18. When desire is devoured, the sap of delight will emerge in new forms, replacing mortal pleasure with the immortal's ecstasy

"In the egoistic human being, the mental person emergent out of the dim shell of matter, delight of existence is neutral, semi-latent, still in the shadow of the subconscious, hardly more than a concealed soil of plenty covered by desire with a luxuriant growth of poisonous weeds and hardly less poisonous flowers, the pains and pleasures of our egoistic existence. When the divine conscious-force working secretly in us has devoured these growths of desire, when in the image of the Rig Veda the fire of God has burnt up the shoots of earth, that which is concealed at the roots of these pains and pleasures, their cause and secret being, the sap of delight in them, will emerge in new forms not of desire, but of self-existent satisfaction which will replace mortal pleasure by the Immortal's ecstasy. And this transformation is possible because these growths of sensation and emotion are in their essential being, the pains no less than the pleasures, that delight of existence which they seek …." (CWSA 21: 106–107)

19. Whatever be the heavy weight of strife and suffering, it may not be considered too great a price by the strong and adventurous for the glory that is to come

"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)

XI—The Mother Explains Why There Was the Indispensable Error of the Material World

"This is another experience of these last few days. It came to me with an absolute certitude—although it is very difficult to express—that this so-called 'error' of the material world as it is, was indispensable; that is to say, the material mode or way of perceiving, of becoming aware of things, was gained through the 'error' of this creation and would not have existed without it, and it is not something that will vanish into non—existence when we gain the true consciousness—it is something that *is added* in a special way—which was perceived, lived at that moment in the essential Consciousness.

It was like a justification of the creation that has made possible a certain mode of perception—which might be described by the words 'precision', 'exactness' in objectivisation—which could not have existed without it. Because when this Consciousness—the perfect Consciousness, the true Consciousness, *the* Consciousness—was there, present and lived to the exclusion of any other, there was something like a mode of vibration, so to say, a mode of vibration with objective precision and exactness, which could not have existed without this material form of creation.... You see, there was always this great 'Why?'—'Why is it like this?' Why is there all this, which brought about everything that the

human consciousness interprets as suffering, misery and helplessness and everything, all the horrors of ordinary consciousness—why? Why is it? And so this was the answer: in the true Consciousness there is a mode of vibration, of precision and exactness and clarity in objectivisation, which could not have existed without that, which would not have had any opportunity to manifest. That is certain. That is the answer—the all—powerful answer to the 'why'.

…

All this is just words, but that is all we have. Perhaps one day we shall have words or a language which can say these things properly; it is possible, but it will be always a translation." (CWM 10: 221–223)

XII—Unite With the Divine and Then You Will Understand Why There Is Suffering

1.

"*Sweet Mother,*

… But there remains one question: if everything is divine, even the adverse forces, and if everything has been created by Him and He can do everything, then how is it that He takes so much time and uses such roundabout ways? What joy does He get in creating unconscious things and making them conscious? And why all these misfortunes and sufferings?

It is a question that all thinking people have asked.

Some have considered the problem more deeply and asked themselves whether human beings, who are so small and limited, could see things as they really are; and in the hope of understanding better, they have sought for a diviner vision, a global and true vision—with the result of Yoga. And those who have succeeded in their endeavour have found that when one is united with the Divine, one's vision of things changes totally, and they have all come to the same conclusion: unite with the Divine and you will understand.

Blessings." (CWM 16: 413)

2.

"Total union and the perfect manifestation of the Divine are the sole means of putting an end to the suffering and misery of the physical world which are the cause of subconscient pessimism. It is only in perfect union with the Divine that the consciousness can emerge into the eternal delight. And this conscious union is the true goal of earthly existence." (CWM 16: 427)

3.

[Thoughts and Aphorisms]

134 – When thou art able to see how necessary is suffering to final delight, failure to utter effectiveness and retardation to the last rapidity, then thou mayst begin to understand something, however faintly and dimly, of God's workings." [Thoughts and Aphorisms] (CWM 10: 244)

4.

"Human beings could be classified under four principal categories according to the attitude they take in life:

(1) Those who live for themselves. They consider everything in relation to themselves and act accordingly. The vast majority of men are like this.

(2) Those who give their love to another human being and live for him. As for the result, everything naturally depends on the person one chooses to love.

(3) Those who consecrate their life to the service of humanity through some activity done not for personal satisfaction but truly to be useful to others without calculation and without expecting any personal gain from their work.

(4) Those who give themselves entirely to the Divine and live only for Him and through Him. This implies making the effort required to find the Divine, to be conscious of His Will and to work exclusively to serve Him.

In the first three categories, one is naturally subject to the ordinary law of suffering, disappointment and sorrow.

It is only in the last category—if one has chosen it in all sincerity and pursued it with an unfailing patience—that one finds the certitude of total fulfilment and a constant luminous peace." (CWM 16: 428–429)

XIII—Never Be the Cause of Any Additional Suffering in the World

"The world is full of sufferings and sorrows.

One should try never to be the cause of any additional suffering." (CWM 14: 247–248)

XIV—When Will Suffering Be Abolished from the World?

1. **When humanity becomes pure enough to transmit the Divine vibrations without distorting them, then suffering will be abolished from the world**

"Every action has its consequences, good or bad, but the idea of reward and punishment is a purely human idea and does not at all correspond to the way in which the Truth-Consciousness acts. If the Consciousness that rules the world had acted according to human principles of punishment and reward, there would have been no men left on earth for a long time.

When men become pure enough to transmit the divine vibrations without distorting them, then suffering will be abolished from the world. That is the only way." (CWM 12: 379)

XV—When the Earth No Longer Needs to Suffer in Order to Progress, There Will Be No More Suffering

1.

"Only, Sri Aurobindo's idea would seem to be that opposites are the quickest and most effective means of shaping Matter so that it can intensify its manifestation.

As an experience, this is absolutely certain, in the sense that, first of all, when one comes into contact with eternal Love, the supreme Love, one immediately has—how to put it?—a perception, a sensation—it is not an understanding, it is something very concrete: even the most illumined material consciousness, however much it has been moulded and prepared, is *incapable* of manifesting That. The first thing one feels is this kind of incapacity. Then comes an experience: something which manifests a form of—one cannot call it exactly 'cruelty', because it is not cruelty as we know it—but within the totality of circumstances, a vibration appears and, with a certain intensity, refuses love as it is manifested here. It is precisely this: something in the material world which refuses the manifestation of love as it exists at present. I am not speaking of the ordinary world, I am speaking of the present consciousness at its highest. It is an experience, I am speaking of something that has happened. So the part of the consciousness which has been struck by this opposition makes a direct appeal to

the origin of Love, *with an intensity which it would not have without the experience of this refusal*. Limits are broken and a flood pours down which *could not* have manifested before; and something is expressed which was not expressed before.

When one sees this, there is obviously a similar experience from the point of view of what we call life and death. It is this kind of constant 'brooding' or presence of Death and the possibility of death, as it is said in *Savitri*: we have a constant companion throughout the journey from cradle to grave; we are constantly accompanied by this threat or presence of Death. Well, along with this, in the cells, there is a call for a Power of Eternity, with an intensity which would not be there except for this constant threat. Then one understands, one begins to feel quite concretely that all these things are only ways of intensifying the manifestation, of making it progress, of making it more perfect. And if the means are crude, it is because the manifestation itself is very crude. And as it becomes more perfect and fit to manifest that which is *eternally progressive*, the very crude means will give way to subtler ones and the world will progress without any need for such brutal oppositions. This is simply because the world is still in its infancy and human consciousness is still entirely in its infancy.

This is a very concrete experience.

It follows that when the earth no longer needs to die in order to progress, there will be no more death. When the earth no longer needs to suffer in order to progress, there will be no more suffering. And when the earth no longer needs to hate in order to love, there will be no more hatred. (CWM 10: 166)

2.

"*Is suffering indispensable in order to make progress?*

Certainly NOT." (CWM 17: 118)

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