

PURITY IN SADHANA

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

Purity in Sadhana

Second Edition

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As the jasmine flower represents purity, the cover features a photograph of jasmine

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 the series of comprehensive compilations on the virtues and qualities prescribed by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother as necessary for the practice of Yoga, we present this compilation on the virtue of Purity under the title *Purity in Sadhana*.

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—What Is Purity

A. Purity: its meaning

1. "Purity means freedom from soil or mixture. … Ordinarily purity is used to mean (in the common language) freedom from vital passion and impulse." (CWSA 29: 48)

2. "Purity is to accept no other influence but only the influence of the Divine." (CWSA 29: 48)

3. "If one lives only for the Divine and by the Divine, there follows a perfect purity." (CWM 14: 149)

4. "Sri Aurobindo does not use the word purity in the ordinary moral sense. For him, 'purity' means 'exclusively under the influence of the Divine', expressing only the Divine." (CWM 10: 294)

5. "It [purity] is more a condition than a substance." (CWSA 29: 48)

6. "If we call 'perfect receptivity' the receptivity that receives only the Divine Influence and no other, it is certain—and at the same time it is perfect purity.

This is what we should strive for." (CWM 16: 388)

7. "Purity is the best of powers." (CWM 14: 149)

8. "Collective purity: a very precious achievement but one difficult to obtain." (CWM 14: 150)

9. "Ascetic purity is simply the rejection of all vital movements; instead of taking up these movements and turning them towards the Divine, that is to say, instead of seeing the supreme Presence in them and letting the Supreme act freely on them, you tell Him, 'No, that is not your concern.' He is not allowed to interfere with them." (CWM 10: 112)

10. "Purity is perfect sincerity and one cannot have it unless the being is entirely consecrated to the Divine." (CWM 14: 149)

11. "Purity and sincerity are the same thing." (CWM 10: 202)

12. "Peace and purity must be got as the foundation of the consciousness, otherwise there is no firm standing ground for the divine play." (CWSA 29: 155)

13. "On earth, true purity is to think as the Divine thinks, to will as the Divine wills, to feel as the Divine feels." (CWM 14: 149)

B. Truly perfectly pure from the spiritual point of view

1. "*Sweet Mother, to be pure means what?*

To be pure, what does it mean? One is truly perfectly pure only when the whole being, in all its elements and all its movements, adheres fully, exclusively, to the divine Will. This indeed is total purity. It does not depend on any moral or social law, any mental convention of any kind. It depends exclusively on this: when all the elements and all the movements of the being adhere exclusively and totally to the divine Will.

Now, there are stages, there are degrees. For example, insincerity, which is one of the greatest impurities, always arises from the fact that a movement or a set of movements, an element of the being or a number of elements, want to follow their own will and not be the expression of the divine Will. So this produces in the being either a revolt or a falsehood. I don't mean that one tells lies, but I mean that one is in a state of falsehood, of insincerity. And then, the consequences are more or less serious and more or less extensive according to the gravity of the movement itself and its importance. But these, if one sees from the point of view of purity, these are the real impurities.

For example, if you take your stand on a moral viewpoint—which is itself altogether wrong from the spiritual point of view—there are people who apparently lead an altogether perfectly moral life, who conform to all the social laws, all the customs, the moral conventions, and who are amass of impurity—from the spiritual point of view these beings are profoundly impure. On the other hand there are some poor people who do things... who are born, for instance, with a sense of freedom, and do things which are not considered very respectable from the social or moral point of view, and who can be in a state of inner aspiration and inner sincerity which makes them infinitely purer than the others. This is one of the big difficulties. As soon as one speaks of these things, there arises the deformation produced in the consciousness by all the social and moral conventions. As soon as you speak of purity, a moral monument comes in front of you which completely falsifies your notion. And note that it is infinitely easier to be moral from the social point of view than to be moral from the spiritual point of view. To be moral from the social viewpoint one has only to take good care to do nothing which is not approved of by others; this may be somewhat difficult, but still it is not impossible; and one may be, as I said, a monument of insincerity and impurity while doing this; whereas to be pure from the spiritual point of view means a vigilance, a consciousness, a sincerity that stand all tests.

Now, I may put you on your guard against something—I think it is precisely in this very book that Sri Aurobindo has spoken about it—about people who live in their vital consciousness and say, 'I indeed am above moral laws, I follow a higher law, I am free from all moral laws.' And they say this because they want to indulge in all irregularities. These people, then, have a double impurity: they have spiritual impurity and in addition social impurity. And these usually have a very good opinion of themselves, and they assert their wish to live their life with an unequalled impudence. But such people we don't want.

Yet usually the people whom I have found most difficult to convert are very respectable people. I am sorry, but I have had much more difficulty with respectable people than with those who were not so, for they had such a good opinion of themselves that it was impossible to open them. But the true thing *is* difficult. That is to say, one must be very vigilant and very self-controlled, very patient, and have a never-failing goodwill. One must not neglect having a small dose of humility, a sufficient one, and one must never be satisfied with the sincerity one has. One must always want more." (CWM 6: 438–440)

2. "The ultimate object of life is to get rid of the perversity, impurity & disturbance & express them perfectly in these other conditions. Your life on this earth is a divine poem that you are translating into earthly language or a strain of

music which you are rendering into words." (CWSA 12: 100)

C. The divine purity

1. "It is like the word 'purity'; one could hold forth interminably on the difference between divine purity and what people call purity. The divine purity, at the lowest, allows no influence other than the divine influence—at the lowest. … the divine purity means that there is only the Divine, nothing else—it is perfectly pure, there is only the Divine, there is nothing other than Him." (CWM 10: 105)

2. "The divine Purity is that in which there is no mixture of the turbid ignorant movements of the lower nature." (CWSA 29: 48)

3. "The Divine Purity is a more wide and all-embracing experience than the psychic." (CWSA 29: 48)

4. "Divine purity: it is happy just to be, in all simplicity." (CWM 14: 150)

5. "For us the Divine is Peace, Purity, Wideness, Light, Ananda." (CWSA 31: 681)

6. "... God is love and beauty as well as purity." (CWSA 25: 177)

7. "Our aim must be to be perfect as God in His being and bliss is perfect, pure as He is pure, blissful as He is blissful, and, when we are ourselves siddha in the purna Yoga, to bring all mankind to the same divine perfection." (CWSA 12: 98)

8. "The divine existence is of the nature not only of freedom, but of purity, beatitude and perfection." (CWSA 23: 48)

9. "Divine Nature is the nature of the divine Consciousness, Truth, Peace, Light, Purity, Knowledge, Power, Ananda on whichever plane it manifests." (CWSA 35: 87)

10. "He [God] has manifested in the world through the play of all governing Soul with its own formative Will or Shakti a rhythm of existence of which Matter is the lowest term and pure being the highest. Mind & Life stand upon Matter (Manas & Prana on Annam) and make the lower half of world-existence (aparardha); pure consciousness and pure bliss proceed out of pure Being (Chit and Ananda out of Sat) and make the upper half of world-existence. Pure idea (vijnana) stands as the link between the two." (CWSA 12: 99)

D. Integral purity

1. "Integral purity: the whole being is purified of the ego." (CWM 14: 149)

2. "Power of integral purity: the power to accept nothing but the divine influence." (CWM 14: 150)

3. "An integral purity which shall enable on the one hand the perfect reflection of the divine Being in ourselves and on the other the perfect outpouring of its Truth and Law in us in the terms of life and through the right functioning of the complex instrument we are in our outer parts, is the condition of an integral liberty." (CWSA 23: 48–49)

E. The self and the psychic being are always pure

1. "Only the self and the psychic being remain always pure." (CWSA 29: 49)

2. "When we say that all is a divine manifestation, even that which we call undivine, we mean that in its essentiality all is divine even if the form baffles or repels us. Or, to put it in a formula to which it is easier for our psychological sense of things to give its assent, in all things there is a presence, a primal Reality,—the Self, the Divine,

Brahman,—which is for ever pure, perfect, blissful, infinite: its infinity is not affected by the limitations of relative things; its purity is not stained by our sin and evil; its bliss is not touched by our pain and suffering; its perfection is not impaired by our defects of consciousness, knowledge, will, unity." (CWSA 21: 407)

3. "… but the psychic entity in us persists and is fundamentally the same always: it contains all essential possibilities of our manifestation but is not constituted by them; it is not limited by what it manifests, not contained by the incomplete forms of the manifestation, not tarnished by the imperfections and impurities, the defects and depravations of the surface being. It is an ever-pure flame of the divinity in things and nothing that comes to it, nothing that enters into our experience can pollute its purity or extinguish the flame. This spiritual stuff is immaculate and luminous and, because it is perfectly luminous, …" (CWSA 22: 924)

4. "281. Purity is in thy soul; but for actions, where is their purity or impurity?" [On Thoughts and Aphorisms]
(CWSA 12: 461)

II—Why There Is No Purity in the World

A. The process of creation is the reason why purity no longer manifests

1. "Well, the original Will was to form individual beings capable of becoming conscious once again of their divine origin. Because of the process of individualisation one must feel separate if one is to be an individual. The moment you are separated, you are cut off from the original consciousness, at least apparently, and you fall into the inconscient. For the only thing which is the Life of life is the Origin, if you cut yourself off from that, consciousness naturally is changed into unconsciousness. And then it is due to this very unconsciousness that you are no longer aware of the truth of your being.... It is a process. You cannot argue whether it is inevitable or evitable; the fact is it is like that. This process of formation and creation is the reason why purity no longer manifests in its essence and in its purity but through the deformation of unconsciousness and ignorance.... If you had answered immediately: 'Yes, of course, I know the truth of my being!' it would have finished there, there wouldn't have been any problem.

That is why there is all this ugliness, there is death; that is why there is illness; that is why there is wickedness; that is why there is suffering. … All this is there in different

domains and with different vibrations, but the cause of all is the same. It is inconscience produced because of the necessity of individual formation. …

And so, the remedy? Since such is the cause, the only way of putting everything right is to become conscious once again." (CWM 5: 71–72)

2. "*If everything that is manifested in the physical world has its origin in the higher Truth, what is it that makes it ugly when it expresses itself? Why are there ugly things at all?*

Because there are forces that intervene between the origin and the manifestation.

If I ask you, 'Do you know the truth of your being?' What will you say?... Do you know it? Well, the same holds for everything. And yet you are already a sufficiently evolved thinking being who has passed through all kinds of refinements. You are no longer quite like, let us say, a lizard that runs on the wall; and yet you would not be able to say what the truth of your being is. That is just the secret of all deformations in the world. It is because there is all the inconscience created by the fact of separation from the Origin. It is due to this inconscience that the Origin, though always there, is not able to manifest itself. It is there, that is why the world exists. But in its expression it is deformed

because it manifests itself through the inconscience, ignorance and obscurity." (CWM 5: 70)

3. "Actually there is but one Origin and this origin is the perfection of Truth, for that is the only thing which truly exists; and by exteriorising, projecting, scattering itself, it brings forth what we see, and a crowd of tiny brains, very gentle, very brilliant, in search of something they have not yet seized but which they can seize, because what they are in search of is within them. That is a certainty. It may take more or less time, but it is sure to come. The remedy is at the very core of the evil. *Voila*.

It has been called by various names, each one has presented it in his own way. According to the angle of seeing, one's experience differs. All those who have found the Divine within themselves have found Him in a certain way, following a certain experience and from a certain angle, and this angle was self-evident to them." (CWM 5: 72)

B. The vital nature of the earth is full of harmful energies, and therefore the purification of man's outer vital nature is difficult

1. "What you saw was not what is in yourself, but a symbol of the things that are in vital Nature. Scorpions and usually snakes also are symbols of harmful energies; the vital

nature of earth is full of these energies and that is why the purification of man's outer vital nature also is so difficult and there are so many wrong movements and happenings in him,—because his vital is easily open to all these earth movements. In order to get rid of them, the inner being must wake and grow and its nature replace the outer nature. Sometimes serpents indicate energies simply, not harmful ones; but more often it is the other way. On the other hand the peacocks you saw were powers of victory, the victory of the energies of light over the energies of darkness." (CWSA 30: 171)

C. In the course of evolution, man, the mental being, leaves behind spontaneous purity

> "30–I saw a child wallowing in the dirt and the same child cleaned by his mother and resplendent, but each time I trembled before his utter purity. [On Thoughts and Aphorisms]

Can a child keep this purity even when he has grown up?

In theory, it is not impossible, and some people born away from cities, civilisations and cultures may maintain throughout the life of their earthly body this spontaneous purity, a purity of the soul that is not obscured by the mind's working.

For the purity of which Sri Aurobindo speaks here is the purity of instinct, that obeys Nature's impulses spontaneously, never calculating, never questioning, never asking whether it is good or bad, whether what one does is right or wrong, whether it is a virtue or a sin, whether the outcome will be favourable or unfavourable. All these notions come into play when the mental ego makes its appearance and begins to take a dominant position in the consciousness and to veil the spontaneity of the soul.

In modern 'civilised' life, parents and teachers, by their practical and rational 'good advice', lose no time in covering up this spontaneity which they call unconsciousness, and substituting for it a very small, very narrow, limited mental ego, withdrawn into itself, crammed with notions of misbehaviour and sin and punishment or of personal interest, calculation and profit; all of which has the inevitable result of increasing vital desires through repression, fear or self-justification.

And yet for the sake of completeness it should be added that because man is a mental being, he must necessarily in the course of his evolution leave behind this unconscious and spontaneous purity, which is very similar to the purity of the animal, and after passing through an unavoidable period of mental perversion and impurity, rise beyond the mind into the higher and luminous purity of the divine consciousness." (CWM 10: 54–55)

2. "As I have said, you have it, you have the experience, but as soon as you want to express it, it is gone, it becomes again... (*gesture of being closed*). That is to say, the substance of which we are built up is not sufficiently purified, enlightened, transformed (it does not matter what word) to express the supreme Consciousness without deforming it." (CWM 11: 130)

D. The human being, if not cultured, always chooses wrong things

1. "The world has been so made—at least up to now, let us hope that it will not be so for much longer—that, spontaneously, a man who is not cultured, when he is brought into contact with ideas, always chooses wrong ideas.

And a child who is not educated always chooses bad company. It is a thing I experience constantly and concretely. If you keep a child in a special atmosphere and if, from a very early age, you instill in him a special atmosphere, a special purity, he has a chance of not making a wrong choice. But a child who is taken from the world as it is and is placed in a society where there are good and bad elements will go straight to those who can spoil him, teach him wrong things, that is to say, towards the worst company.

A man who has no intellectual culture, if you give him some mixed ideas, just at random, to choose from, he will always choose the stupid ones; because, as Sri Aurobindo has told us, this is a world of falsehood, of ignorance and an effort is needed, an aspiration; one must come in contact with one's inmost being—a conscious and luminous contact—if one is to distinguish the true from the false, the good influence from the bad. If you let yourself go, you sink into a hole.

Things are like that because what rules the world—oh! let us put it in the past tense, so that it becomes true—what ruled the world was falsehood and ignorance.

In fact, for the moment, it is still like that; one should have no illusions about it. But perhaps with a great effort and great vigilance we shall be able to make it otherwise... soon—the 'perhaps' is for 'soon'." (CWM 3: 244–245)

2. "No! The subconscient records everything, and if you have the impression that an ordinary book leaves no effect, it means that you are not conscious of what goes on within you. Each time you read a book in which the consciousness is very low, it strengthens your subconscient and inconscient—it prevents your consciousness from rising upward. It is as if you threw buckets of dirty water on the efforts you had made to purify your subconscient.

It is inevitable, but there are people who are not even aware that their consciousness has fallen very low." (CWM 4: 152)

3. "There is a state in which a simple conversation which obliges you to remain on the level of ordinary life gives you a headache, turns your stomach and, if it continues, may give you a fever. I am speaking of course about the gossip-type of conversations. I believe that apart from a few exceptions, everybody indulges in this exercise and talks of things about which he should keep silent or chatters about other things. It becomes so natural that you are not troubled by it. But if you continue in this way, you hinder your consciousness completely from rising up; you bind yourself with iron chains to the ordinary consciousness and the work in the subconscious is not done or has not even begun. Those who want to rise up have already enough difficulties without looking for encouragements outside.

Naturally, the effort to keep the consciousness at a high level is tiring in the beginning, like the exercises you do to develop your muscles. But you do not give up gymnastics because of that! So mentally also you must do the same thing. You must not allow your mind to stoop low: gossiping degrades you and, if you want to do Yoga, you must abstain from it, that's all." (CWM 4: 152–153)

E. The sign of the present times is the vulgarization of everything

1. "*Sweet Mother, the 'Dortoir' children told me to ask you if it is good to read the illustrated 'classics.*

…

(The child gives Mother a copy of these 'Classics')

Nowadays all children read this and they told me that they read it even during the class, when the teacher is speaking of something else.

Well, what is this stuff? (*Mother turns over the pages*) Ooooh! Where does it come from, this thing?

From America.

It is American? (*Mother turns some more pages*) Well, my children, it is lamentably vulgar! There, that's all I can say about it.

Nowadays there are hundreds of these things here, Sweet Mother!

There are hundreds of copies?

…

Yes, it is a sign of the times. It is the vulgarisation of everything: the vulgarisation of ideas, the vulgarisation of masterpieces, the vulgarisation of history, everything; everything put as low as possible, so that one doesn't need to raise oneself, one can crawl on the ground and have this. It is the descent of the consciousness as low as possible and then one wallows there!

Oh, no! It is repulsive!

However, that's your business! If you like to live like animals which love to waddle in mud, do that, it's your affair. That's all. It is deplorable!

Good, the question is closed, without any amendment.

Now I don't give orders; each one follows his own consciousness. If you want to go down it is a very good means. (*Laughter*)

If you want to go up, well, I advise you to throw it away into the street. Oh! It doesn't matter where. It's not worth keeping—anywhere.

…

Just imagine, even when these things are given to you on a record (we had some records) well, even that... I was just on the point of saying, 'Well, it is a little vulgar.' Because, so that the record may sell and be heard by everybody, they bring down the artistic value of the thing a little, in order to put it within the range of the public... and it was a bit grandiloquent, forced, it did not have all

the purity of the original. Julius Caesar was played to us on7e day, you know. Well, there already I made my reservations; I told myself, 'It is falsifying people's taste.' Instead of having the pure nobility of the thing, it exaggerates just a little in order to please the greatest number.

So you understand, this was already a summit in comparison. At least, it had some aspirations to artistic realisation. It was not altogether well realised but there was an effort.

This thing is the very opposite. Still...!

Now, be courageous! How many of you have read these books?

(*Many children raise their hands*).

Good heavens! And you have the cheek to ask me to give meditations! Well, here's a fine preparation for meditating!

I read a few just to see, Sweet Mother.

Good.

Well, this evening I won't give you any meditation. It will be for next week, if you like, but not this evening.

There, then! *Au revoir*." (CWM 7: 283–286)

F. There is no greater impurity than ignorance

1. "Another point to remember from our reading concerns impurity and the Dhammapada gives the example of bad will and wrong action. Wrong action, says our text, is a taint in this world as well as in others. In the next verse it is said that there is no greater impurity than ignorance, that is to say, ignorance is considered as the essential, the central fault, which urgently needs to be corrected, and what is called ignorance is not simply not knowing things, not having the superficial knowledge of things, it means forgetting the very reason of our existence, the truth that has to be discovered." (CWM 3: 264)

2. "Perversion is something that goes astray from the divine truth and purity. The moment you start living in ignorance and falsehood, you live in perversion; and the whole world is made of ignorance and falsehood at present. So this means that if you remain in the ordinary consciousness, you are necessarily in the perversion of the ego." (CWM 6: 268)

G. Everything that brings down one's consciousness is an obstacle to one's progress

1. "But everything that brings down the consciousness is an obstacle in one's progress. If you have a desire it

creates an obstacle in your progress; if you have a bad thought or bad will, it creates an obstacle in your progress; if you welcome some kind of falsehood, it creates an obstacle in your progress; and if you cultivate vulgarity in yourself, it creates an obstacle in your progress; everything which is not in keeping with the Truth creates an obstacle to progress; and there are hundreds of these things every day.

For example, every movement of impatience, every movement of anger, every movement of violence, every tendency to dissimulation, every deformation of the truth, whether big or small, every bad will, every partial judgment, every preference, every encouragement to bad taste and to... yes, to vulgarity, all this is constantly in the way. All this, every one of these movements, big or small, passing or lasting, all are like so many stones to build the wall to prevent yourself from progressing. It is not one thing only, there are hundreds of them, thousands. It is enough to have a preference in oneself, it is enough to be impatient, enough to have a little desire to conceal something, enough to feel a disgust, a distaste for effort, it is enough... anything at all is enough, which has something to do with desires, repulsions, all that, for it to impede your progress. And then, from the point of view of the intellectual being, the artistic being, the side of inner and outer culture, every lack of taste, whatever it may be, is a terrible obstacle.

This world, I must say, is a world of extremes from the point of view of taste, artistic and literary culture; on one side, it makes a great effort to discover something that's very high, very pure, very noble, and on the other, at the other end, it sinks into a vulgarity which certainly is infinitely greater than the vulgarity of the past two or three centuries. What is curious is that, going back two or three centuries, people who were uncultured were gross, but their grossness resembled that of animals, and there was not much perversion in it; there was a little, because as soon as the mind is there, perversion comes in, but there was not a great deal of perversion. But now, what does not rise to the mountain-peak, what remains on ground level, is *absolutely* perverted in its grossness, that is, it is not only ignorant and stupid, it is ugly, dirty and repugnant, it is deformed, it is wicked, it is *very* low. And it is indeed the wrong use of the mind which has produced this. Without the mind this perversion did not exist, but it's the wrong use of the mind which produces this perversion. Well, it has become what is ugly from every point of view, now, what is vulgar and ugly.

There are things, things considered very pretty nowadays... I have seen photographs or reproductions which are considered very fine but they are *frightfully* vulgar in their perversion, and yet people go into ecstasies over them and find them pretty! It's because there is something deformed, not only without culture, not only

undeveloped, but deformed, something that's much worse, because it is much more difficult to restore something perverted and deformed than to enlighten something ignorant and uneducated. Well, I think some things have been great instruments of perversion, and among these one may put the cinema. It could have been, and I hope it will become, an instrument of education and development; but for the moment it has been an instrument of perversion, and of a truly hideous perversion: perversion of taste, perversion of consciousness, and everything with a terrible moral and physical ugliness. Yet it is something which can be used for education, progress, culture and artistic development; and from this point of view it could be a means of spreading beauty and culture much more widely and making them much more accessible to all, than the former methods could do. But it is always like this—for what can be better, if it is not better, it becomes worse. And as I said at the beginning, we are in a period of excesses—excess in every way—a thing tries excessively to perfect itself and falls into excesses of perversion which, relatively, are as great if not greater. And if one looks attentively at oneself, one becomes aware that naturally, as one lives in the world as it is at present, one shares in its vulgarity, and that unless one observes oneself closely and constantly puts the light of one's highest consciousness upon oneself, one risks making mistakes in taste, from the spiritual point of view, rather frequently.

There we are!

Now I am going to give you a meditation this evening, and I am going to see whether you are capable of taking a cerebral bath. Cleansing!

Mother, when we meditate here, on which centre should we concentrate?

Truly speaking, each time it ought to be different.

The first time I told you to meditate upon what we had read, didn't I? Well, if you like, today we could try to let a purifying consciousness enter into us, which will give us, as I just said jokingly, a brain bath, that is, a good little cleansing—a light which purifies and cleans." (CWM 7: 294–296)

H. Fear is one of the greatest impurities

1. "So many people doubt the effectiveness of the Protection, the safety of the Path, because others go astray. And in their egoism they tremble with fear instead of telling themselves what I have just been reading to you this evening, what is the cause of all catastrophes, small or great, which threaten those who follow the path of yoga without having taken the necessary care to be sufficiently pure and sincere.

No protection, no Grace can save those who refuse the indispensable purification.

And I would add this: that fear is an impurity, one of the greatest impurities, one of those which come most directly from the anti-divine forces which want to destroy the divine action on earth; and the first duty of those who really want to do yoga is to eliminate from their consciousness, with all the might, all the sincerity, all the endurance of which they are capable, even the shadow of a fear. To walk on the path, one must be dauntless, and never indulge in that petty, small, feeble, nasty shrinking back upon oneself, which is fear." (CWM 8: 260)

I. The human ego's virtue is a pretentious impurity

1. "When the human ego realises that its will is a tool, its wisdom ignorance and childishness, its power an infant's groping, its virtue a pretentious impurity, and learns to trust itself to that which transcends it, that is its salvation." (CWSA 23: 59)

2. "... purification is an essential means towards self-perfection. All these impurities and inadequacies result in various kinds of limitation and bondage: but there are two or three primary knots of the bondage,—ego is the principal knot,—from which the others derive. These bonds

must be got rid of; purification is not complete till it brings about liberation. Besides, after a certain purification and liberation has been effected, there is still the conversion of the purified instruments to the law of a higher object and utility, a large, real and perfect order of action. By the conversion man can arrive at a certain perfection of fullness of being, calm, power and knowledge, even a greater vital action and more perfect physical existence. One result of this perfection is a large and perfected delight of being, Ananda." (CWSA 24: 639)

3. "The vital ego hates being opposed in its desires, resents disappointment, is furious against wounds to its pride and vanity; it does not like the process of purification and it may very well declare Satyagraha against it, refuse to cooperate, justify its own demands and inclinations, offer passive resistance of many kinds, withdraw the vital support which is necessary both to the life and the sadhana and try to withdraw the being from the path of spiritual endeavour." (CWSA 31: 690)

4. "What you say [*about the need to purify oneself of ego*] is perfectly correct—I am glad you are becoming so lucid and clear-sighted, the result surely of a psychic change. Ego is a very curious thing and in nothing more than in its way of hiding itself and pretending it is not the ego. It can always hide even behind an aspiration to serve the Mother.

The only way of getting rid of it is to chase it out of all its veils and corners.

You are right also in thinking that this is really the most important part of your Yoga. The Rajayogis are right in putting purification in front of everything and a preliminary to successful meditation—as I was also right in putting it in front along with concentration in the *Synthesis*. You have only to look around you to see that experiences and even realisations cannot bring one to the goal if this is not done—at any moment they can fall owing to the vital still being impure and full of ego." (CWSA 31: 232)

5. "To cast out of us the ego idea is not entirely possible or not entirely effective until these instruments have undergone purification; for, their action being persistently egoistic and separative, the buddhi is carried away by them,—as a boat by winds on the sea, says the Gita,—the knowledge in the intelligence is being constantly obscured or lost temporarily and has to be restored again, a very labour of Sisyphus. But if the lower instruments have been purified of egoistic desire, wish, will, egoistic passion, egoistic emotion and the buddhi itself of egoistic idea and preference, then the knowledge of the spiritual truth of oneness can find a firm foundation." (CWSA 24: 677)

6. "Everybody has the ego and it is impossible to get rid of it altogether except by two things—the opening of the

psychic within and the descent of a wider ego-free consciousness from above. The psychic being opening does not get rid of the ego at once but purifies it and offers it and all the movements to the Divine, so that one becomes unegoistic through self-giving and surrender. At the same time the nature opens above and the wider ego-free consciousness comes down and ego disappears and by the power of the psychic you know your own true being which is a portion of the Mother. This is what has to happen, but it cannot happen in so short a time." (CWSA 31: 236)

J. Doubt in this age is an almost universal impurity

1. "... doubt in this age is an almost universal impurity." (CWSA 13: 74)

K. Knowing one's impurities is necessary, but one should not fix one's attention on them

1. "*Isn't it true that one should know all one's impurities?*

Knowing them is indeed necessary, but it is not good to fix one's attention too constantly on them; it does not help to remove them—on the contrary." (CWM 17: 38–39)

L. It is better to keep one's thought fixed on purity rather than on impurity

1. "*May I know how the vital works? I think it is still full of impurities.*

Thinking too much about one's impurities does not help. It is better to keep your thought fixed on the purity, light and peace that you want to acquire." (CWM 17: 24)

M. Problems of impurity

1. "For in an impure mind the silence will soon fill with misleading lights and false voices, the echo or sublimation of its own vain conceits and opinions or the response to its secret pride, vanity, ambition, lust, greed or desire. The Titans and the Demons will speak to it more readily than the divine Voices." (CWSA 12: 256)

2. "And it must be a surrender and an opening to the Divine alone and to no other. For it is possible for an obscure mind or an impure life force in us to surrender to undivine and hostile forces and even to mistake them for the Divine. There can be no more calamitous error. Therefore our surrender must be no blind and inert passivity to all influences or any influence, but sincere, conscious, vigilant,

pointed to the One and the Highest alone." (CWSA 12: 170–171)

3. "A much worse thing may befall those who break something of the human bonds but have not purity and have not the knowledge, for they may become instruments, but not of the Divine; too often, using his name, they serve unconsciously his Masks and black Contraries, the Powers of Darkness." (CWSA 23: 250)

4. "Peace is necessary for all; without peace and an increasing purity, even if one opens, one cannot receive perfectly all that comes down through the opening. Light too is necessary for all—without light one cannot take full advantage of all that comes down." (CWSA 29: 123)

5. "In reality, calm is not a negative thing; it is the very nature of the Sat-Purusha and the positive foundation of the divine consciousness. Whatever else is aspired for and gained, this must be kept. Even Knowledge, Power, Ananda, if they come and do not find this foundation, are unable to remain and have to withdraw until the divine purity and peace of the Sat-Purusha are permanently there." (CWSA 29: 146)

6. "If there is impurity and insincerity within, the outer change will not be effective; but if there is a sincere inner

working, the outer change will help it and accelerate the process." (CWSA 30: 42)

7. "There must be a real living and lasting unity behind the love. It is understood of course that such things as sexual impurity must disappear also." (CWSA 31: 289)

8. "The worst of a vital nightmare consists generally in fighting with an enemy who wants to kill you, and you strike him terrible blows, and the blows never hit; you exert all your force, all your energy, and you do not succeed in touching your adversary. He is there in front of you, he threatens you, he is going to strangle you and you gather all your strength, you try to strike, but nothing touches him. When the struggle is like that, hand to hand, with a being who throws himself upon you, it is particularly painful. That is why you are advised not to go out of the body unless you have the necessary power or the purity. You see, in this kind of nightmare the force you want to use is the 'memory' of a physical force; but one may have great physical strength, be a first-class boxer, and yet be completely powerless in the vital world because one does not have the necessary vital power. As for the mental nightmares, that kind of frightful saraband in the head, one has altogether the impression of going mad." (CWM 4: 194–195)

9. "Only, as I have already told you, it is not very prudent to venture into these [occult] domains without a previous initiation and, above all, a purification of nature which prevents you from entering there all weighed down and deformed by your desires, your passions, egoisms, fears and weaknesses. Before undertaking these activities one needs a complete preparation of self-purification and widening of the consciousness which is absolutely indispensable." (CWM 8: 217)

10. "It should be noted that none of the siddhis of power can act perfectly or freely so long as there is impurity of the chitta, egoism in the thought and temperament or domination of desire in the use of the siddhi." (CWSA 10: 21–22)

III—Not to Be Discouraged by One's Own Faults

A. Whatever the faults may be, remember that we carry supreme purity within ourselves

1. "And finally, lest you get discouraged by your own faults, the Dhammapada gives you this solacing image: the purest lily can spring out of a heap of rubbish by the wayside. That is to say, there is nothing so rotten that it cannot give birth to the purest realisation.

Whatever may be the past, whatever may be the faults committed, whatever the ignorance in which one might have lived, one carries deep within oneself the supreme purity which can translate itself into a wonderful realisation.

The whole point is to think of that, to concentrate on that and not to be concerned with all the difficulties and obstacles and hindrances.

Concentrate exclusively on what you want to be, forget as entirely as possible what you do not want to be." (CWM 3: 215)

B. Wanting all pettiness and stupidity to disappear is the right thing

1. "*Mother, why are these silly things in me? I don't want them. They have been in me long enough. Now I don't*

want them. I shall not rest until You come into my heart and live there eternally.

My Mother, give me purity and constancy in my aspiration.

Certain conditions in us (and pride is one of them) automatically invite blows from the surrounding circumstances. And it is up to us to utilise these blows to make further progress.

You are right in wanting all this pettiness and stupidity to disappear. I am fully with you in this determination and I am sure that you will triumph." (CWM 16: 93)

2. "Q: Do people really throw their impurities on the Mother or does she draw their impurities into herself in order to purify them?

A: There is not the slightest necessity for the Mother drawing impurities into herself—any more than for the sadhak inviting impurity to come into himself. Impurity has to be thrown away, not drawn in." (CWSA 32: 589)

C. Once one begins to be conscious of one's faults and has the will to be free, one must keep that will

1. "The egoism, desires, faults of the nature are in everybody very much the same. But once one begins to be conscious of them and has the will to be free, then one has only to keep that will and there will be no real danger. For when one begins to be conscious in the way you have begun and something from within raises up all that was hidden, it means that the Mother's grace is on your nature and her force is working and your inner being is aiding the Mother's force to get rid of all these things. So you must not be sorrowful or discouraged or fear anything, but look steadily at all that comes out and have the will that it should go completely and for ever. With the Mother's force working and the psychic being supporting the force, all can be done and all will surely be done. This purification is made just in order that no trouble may occur in the future such as happened to some because they were not purified—in order that the higher consciousness may come into a purified nature and the inner transformation securely take place. Go on therefore with faith and courage putting your reliance on the Mother." (CWSA 31: 736)

IV—Purification Is the First Necessary Step in the Spiritual Life

A. The sadhaka has first to purify the lower vital consciousness

1. "Purification—rejecting from one's nature all that is egoistic or of the nature of rajasic desire.

Aspiration for peace and calm and a perfect equality.

Purification and a basis of calm are the first necessary steps in the spiritual life." (CWSA 29: 46)

2. "Sadhana must be the main thing and sadhana means the purification of the nature, the consecration of the being, the opening of the psychic and the inner mind and vital, the contact and presence of the Divine, the realisation of the Divine in all things, surrender, devotion, the widening of the consciousness into the cosmic Consciousness, the Self one in all, the psychic and the spiritual transformation of the nature. If these things are neglected and only poetry and mental development and social contacts occupy all the time, then that is not sadhana." (CWSA 31: 78)

3. "Very often the earlier stage of the sadhana is successful, because there is an opening of the mind to first workings of the Force—afterwards the lower vital

consciousness and the physical rise up and if these are not ready or inclined for the sadhana, it ceases. The sadhaka has first to purify and open them and call in the Force to work there and make all ready until he can bring the true consciousness and experience there. Yoga implies a long and difficult work and one must be ready to accept the necessity of years of preparation and purification and increasing consecration before the greater results can come." (CWSA 29: 47)

4. "A certain amount of purification is necessary before there can be any realisation of the Divine and that is what has been going on in you. It is after all not a very long time since the real purification began and it is never an easy work. So the impatience may be natural, but it is not exactly reasonable." (CWSA 29: 46)

5. "The aspiration must be for entire purification, especially (1) purification from sex, so that no sex imaginations may enter and the sex impulse may cease, (2) purification from desires and demands, (3) purification from depression which is the result of disappointed desires. It is the most important for you. Particularly what you must aspire for is peace in all the being, complete equanimity, samata. The feeling that peace is not enough must go. Peace and purity and equanimity once established, all the rest must be the

Mother's free gift, not a result of the demand from the being.

You can mix normally with people keeping as much as possible an inner quietude. In future when the purification is done and a continuous experience possible we can reconsider the matter." (CWSA 29: 46)

6. "The outer nature has to undergo a change of poise, a quieting, a purification and fine mutation of its substance and energy by which the many obstacles in it rarefy, drop away or otherwise disappear; it then becomes possible to pass through to the depths of our being and from the depths so reached a new consciousness can be formed, both behind the exterior self and in it, joining the depths to the surface." (CWSA 22: 938)

B. It is in physical life that one has the opportunity to purify oneself and make spiritual progress

"It is during one's physical life on earth that one has the opportunity to purify oneself, to make spiritual progress." (CWM 17: 108)

C. Spirituality is not moral purity

1. "But the error so created comes very much in the way of a true understanding, and it must therefore be emphasised that spirituality is not a high intellectuality, not idealism, not an ethical turn of mind or moral purity and austerity, not religiosity or an ardent and exalted emotional fervour, not even a compound of all these excellent things; a mental belief, creed or faith, an emotional aspiration, a regulation of conduct according to a religious or ethical formula are not spiritual achievement and experience. These things are of considerable value to mind and life; they are of value to the spiritual evolution itself as preparatory movements disciplining, purifying or giving a suitable form to the nature; but they still belong to the mental evolution,—the beginning of a spiritual realisation, experience, change is not yet there. Spirituality is in its essence an awakening to the inner reality of our being, to a spirit, self, soul which is other than our mind, life and body, an inner aspiration to know, to feel, to be that, to enter into contact with the greater Reality beyond and pervading the universe which inhabits also our own being, to be in communion with It and union with It, and a turning, a conversion, a transformation of our whole being as a result of the aspiration, the contact, the union, a growth or waking into a new becoming or new being, a new self, a new nature." (CWSA 22: 889–890)

D. Purity, peace, and calm are the first basis that has to be laid in Yoga

1. "Experience in the sadhana is bound to begin with the mental plane,—all that is necessary is that the experience should be sound and genuine. The pressure of understanding and will in the mind and the Godward emotional urge in the heart are the two first agents of Yoga, and peace, purity and calm (with a lulling of the lower unrest) are precisely the first basis that has to be laid; to get that is much more important in the beginning than to get a glimpse of the supraphysical worlds or to have visions, voices and powers. Purification and calm are the first needs in the Yoga. One may have a great wealth of experiences of that kind (worlds, visions, voices etc.) without them, but these experiences occurring in an unpurified and troubled consciousness are usually full of disorder and mixture." (CWSA 30: 45)

2. "Thus purification, liberation, perfection, delight of being are four constituent elements of the Yoga,—*śuddhi, mukti, siddhi, bhukti*." (CWSA 24: 639)

3. "Yoga has four powers and objects, purity, liberty, beatitude and perfection. Whosoever has consummated these four mightinesses in the being of the transcendental,

universal, lilamaya and individual God is the complete and absolute Yogin." (CWSA 12: 93)

4. "You can also tell him that there are two stages in the Yoga, one of preparation and one of the actual intensive sadhana. It is the first that he can undertake. In this stage aspiration in the heart with prayer, bhakti, meditation, a will to offer the life to the Divine are the important things. Purification of the nature is the first aim to be achieved. There should be no over-eagerness for experiences but such as come should be observed and, if helpful to the right attitude and true development, accepted." (CWSA 35: 551)

5. "Therefore neither desire nor shun the world, but seek the bliss & purity & freedom & greatness of God in whatsoever state or experience or environment." (CWSA 12: 93)

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

of God is purna Yoga; the sadhaka of the Divine Perfection is the purna Yogin.

Our aim must be to be perfect as God in His being and bliss is perfect, pure as He is pure, blissful as He is blissful, and, when we are ourselves siddha in the purna Yoga, to bring all mankind to the same divine perfection." (CWSA 12: 98)

7. "Victory in this effort depends upon the sincerity within you, the purity of your aspiration, the burning core of your faith, the absoluteness of your will and surrender[.]" (CWSA 12: 373)

8. "262. If thy heart tell thee, Thus & by such means and at such a time it will happen, believe it not. But if it gives thee the purity and wideness of God's command, hearken to it." (CWSA 12: 459)

9. "354. Self-denial is a mighty instrument for purification; it is not an end in itself nor a final law of living. Not to mortify thyself but to satisfy God in the world must be thy object." (CWSA 12: 470)

10. "You … must be pure for the love of purity … then you are sure to advance on the way." (CWM 3: 265)

E. In Yoga, inner cleanliness is as important as aspiration

1. "I have known people (many, not only a few, I mean among those who do yoga), I have known many who, every time they had a fine aspiration, and their aspiration was very strong and they received an answer to this aspiration, every time, the very same day or at the latest the next day, they had a complete setback of consciousness and were facing the exact opposite of their aspiration. Such things happen almost constantly. Well, these people have developed only the positive side. They make a kind of discipline of aspiration, they ask for help, they try to come into contact with higher forces, they succeed in this, they have experiences; but they have completely neglected cleaning their room; it has remained as dirty as ever, and so, naturally, when the experience has gone, this dirt becomes still more repulsive than before.

One must never neglect to clean one's room, it is very important; inner cleanliness is at least as important as outer cleanliness.

Vivekananda has written (I don't know the original, I have only read the French translation): "One must every morning clean one's soul and one's body, but if you don't have time for both, it is better to clean the soul than clean the body." (CWM 4: 359)

F. What to say in response to all suggestions of impurity

1. "When I spoke of being faithful to the light of the soul and the divine Call, … I was simply affirming the great need in all crises and attacks,—to refuse to listen to any suggestions, impulses, lures and to oppose to them all the call of the Truth, the imperative beckoning of the Light. In all doubt and depression, to say 'I belong to the Divine, I cannot fail'; to all suggestions of impurity and unfitness, to reply 'I am a child of Immortality chosen by the Divine; I have but to be true to myself and to Him—the victory is sure; even if I fell, I would be sure to rise again'; to all impulses to depart and serve some smaller ideal, to reply 'This is the greatest, this is the Truth that alone can satisfy the soul within me; I will endure through all tests and tribulations to the very end of the divine journey.' This is what I mean by faithfulness to the Light and the Call." (CWSA 29: 99) (CWSA 32: 104)

G. The truest reason why we must seek purity is that this liberation is the divine Will in us

1. "The truest reason why we must seek liberation is not to be delivered, individually, from the sorrow of the world, though that deliverance too will be given to us, but that we may be one with the Divine, the Supreme, the Eternal. The

truest reason why we must seek perfection, a supreme status, purity, knowledge, strength, love, capacity, is not that personally we may enjoy the divine Nature or be even as the gods, though that enjoyment too will be ours, but because this liberation and perfection are the divine Will in us, the highest truth of our self in Nature, the always intended goal of a progressive manifestation in the universe." (CWSA 23: 275)

V—One Must Be Truly Sincere to Purify Oneself

A. Have an intense will not to fall back into past errors

1. "Naturally, it is always the same thing: one must... must sincerely want to be healed, for otherwise it does not work. If one wants to have the experience solely for the experience's sake and then the next minute one returns to what one was before, this does not work. But if sincerely one wants to be healed, if one has a real aspiration to overcome the obstacle, to rise—rise above oneself, to give up all that pulls one back, to break the limits, become clear, purify oneself of all that blocks the way, if truly one has the *intense* will not to fall back into past errors, to surge up from the darkness and ignorance, to rise into the light, stripped of all that is too human, too small, too ignorant—then that works. It works, works powerfully. At times it works definitively and totally. But there must be nothing that clings to the old movements, keeps quiet at the moment, hides itself, and then later shows its face and says, 'Yes, yes, it is very fine, your experience, but now it is my turn!' Then, when that happens, I do not answer for anything, because sometimes, as a reaction it becomes worse. That is why I always come back to the same thing, say always the same thing: one must be truly sincere, truly.

One must be ready, if there is something which is clinging, clinging tightly, one must be ready to tear it away completely, without its leaving any trace behind. This is why at times one makes the same mistake and repeats it, until the suffering is sufficiently great to impose a total sincerity. One must not try that method, it is bad. It is bad because it destroys many things, it wastes much energy, spreads bad vibrations. But if one can't do otherwise, well, in the intensity of suffering one can find the will for perfect sincerity.

And there is a moment—in everyone's life there is a moment—when this need for perfect sincerity comes as a definitive choice. There is a moment in one's individual life, also a moment in the collective life when one belongs to a group, a moment when the choice *must* be made, when the purification *must* be done. Sometimes this becomes very serious, it is almost a question of life and death for the group: it *must* make a decisive progress... if it wants to survive." (CWM 6: 146–147)

2. "If you are in a state of conscious aspiration and very sincere, well, everything around you will be arranged in order to help in your aspiration, whether directly or indirectly, that is, either to make you progress, put you in touch with something new or to eliminate from your nature something that has to disappear. This is something quite remarkable. If you are truly in a state of intensity of

aspiration, there is not a circumstance which does not come to help you to realise this aspiration. Everything comes, everything, as though there were a perfect and absolute consciousness organising around you all things, and you yourself in your outer ignorance may not recognize it and may protest at first against the circumstances as they show themselves, may complain, may try to change them; but after a while, when you have become wiser, and there is a certain distance between you and the event, well, you will realise that it was just what you needed to do to make the necessary progress. And, you know, it is a will, a supreme goodwill which arranges all things around you, and even when you complain and protest instead of accepting, it is exactly at such moments that it acts most effectively.

… It goes something like this (I don't remember the words exactly now): If you say to the Divine with conviction, 'I want only You', the Divine will arrange all the circumstances in such a way as to compel you to be sincere. Something in the being... 'I want only You.' ... the aspiration... and then one wants a hundred odd things all the time, isn't that so? At times something comes, just... usually to disturb everything—it stands in the way and prevents you from realizing your aspiration. Well, the Divine will come without showing Himself, without your seeing Him, without your having any inkling of it, and He will arrange all the circumstances in such a way that

everything that prevents you from belonging solely to the Divine will be removed from your path, inevitably. Then when all is removed, you begin to howl and complain; but later, if you are sincere and look at yourself straight in the eye... you have said to the Lord, you have said, 'I want only You.' He will remain close to you, all the rest will go away. This is indeed a higher Grace. Only, you must say this with conviction. I don't even mean that you must say it integrally, because if one says it integrally, the work is done. What is necessary is that one part of the being, indeed the central will, says it with conviction: 'I want only You.' Even once, and it suffices: all that takes more or less long, sometimes it stretches over years, but one reaches the goal." (CWM 6: 176–177)

3. "There is, besides, a marvellous joy in being sincere. Every act of sincerity carries in itself its own reward: the feeling of purification, of soaring upwards, of liberation one gets when one has rejected even one tiny particle of falsehood.

Sincerity is the safeguard, the protection, the guide, and finally the transforming power." (CWM 8: 400)

4. "Regard your life as given you only for the divine work and to help in the divine manifestation. Desire nothing but the purity, force, light, wideness, calm, Ananda of the

divine consciousness and its insistence to transform and perfect your mind, life and body." (CWSA 32: 8)

5. "But if he does things which his inner being does not approve, this condition will be inevitably tarnished and, each time, the possibility of his feeling the presence will diminish. He must have a strong will to purification and an aspiration that does not flag and cease, if the Mother's grace is to be there and effective." (CWSA 32: 165–166)

6. "In order to be cured, my child, not only is it necessary to stop all these unseemly practices completely, but it is necessary to get rid of all these unhealthy desires from your thought and sensation, for it is desires that irritate the organs and make them ill. You must ruthlessly clean up everything and your will is not strong enough for that; invoke my will, call it sincerely and it will be there to help you. You are right when you say that with my help you will surely be able to conquer. That is true, but you must sincerely want this help and let it work within you and in all circumstances." (CWM 15: 147)

B. It is better to start the work of cleaning without losing time

1. "There is one part which has progressed, one part which holds on and doesn't want to move; so you feel it more

and more as something which persists in being what it is. That's because you have dropped some of your baggage on the way and left it on the roadside instead of carrying it along with you. That will always pull you backward. Sometimes, unfortunately, one has to turn back, go and pick it up and bring it along; so one loses much time. This is how, indeed, one loses time. It's because one shuts one's eyes to so many things in the being. One doesn't want to see them, because they are not so pretty to see. So one prefers not to know them. But because one is ignorant of the thing it doesn't mean that it doesn't exist any longer. One does this: one puts it down on the way and then tries to go forward, but it is bound by threads, it pulls one back like a millstone drag, and so one must courageously take it up and hold it up like this (*gesture*) and tell it: 'Now you will walk along with me!' It's no use playing the ostrich. You see, one shuts the eyes and doesn't want to see that one has this fault or that difficulty or that ignorance and stupidity; one doesn't want to see, doesn't want, one looks away to the other side, but it remains there all the same.

One day you have to face the thing, you have to. Otherwise you can never reach the end, it will always pull you backward. You may feel ahead, may see the goal there, drawing near, all this more and more, you may have something which goes before and has almost the feeling that it is going to touch, but you will never touch it if you have these millstones pulling you back. One day you must

make a clean sweep of everything. It sometimes takes very long but one must burn one's bridges; otherwise you go in a round, progress bit by bit until the end of your life, and then, when the time to leave has come you suddenly feel: 'Ah! But... well, it will be perhaps for another time.' This is not pleasant; why, it must be something frightful; for if one has known ... if one doesn't get rid of all the baggage of what does not follow, then it will be necessary to begin again yet another time. Better not. It is better to do one's work while one can do it consciously, and indeed this is what is meant by 'Never put off for tomorrow what you can do today.' This 'today' means in this present life, because the occasion is here, the opportunity here; and perhaps one will have to wait many thousands of years to find it once again. It is better to do one's work, at any cost. there!... losing as little time as possible." (CWM 7: 195–196)

C. One can stop undesirables by persistent and patient refusal

1. "*Sweet Mother, how can we empty the consciousness of its mixed contents?*

By aspiration, the rejection of the lower movements, a call to a higher force. If you do not accept certain movements, then naturally, when they find that they can't manifest,

gradually they diminish in force and stop occurring. If you refuse to express everything that is of a lower kind, little by little the very thing disappears, and the consciousness is emptied of lower things. It is by refusing to give expression—I mean not only in action but also in thought, in feeling. When impulses, thoughts, emotions come, if you refuse to express them, if you push them aside and remain in a state of inner aspiration and calm, then gradually they lose their force and stop coming. So the consciousness is emptied of its lower movements.

But for instance, when undesirable thoughts come, if you look at them, observe them, if you take pleasure in following them in their movements, they will never stop coming. It is the same thing when you have undesirable feelings or sensations: if you pay attention to them, concentrate on them or even look at them with a certain indulgence, they will never stop. But if you absolutely refuse to receive and express them, after some time they stop. You must be patient and very persistent.

In a great aspiration, if you can put yourself into contact with something higher, some influence of your psychic being or some light from above, and if you can manage to put this in touch with these lower movements, naturally they stop more quickly. But before even being able to draw these things by aspiration, you can already stop those movements from finding expression in you by a very persistent and patient refusal. When thoughts which

you do not like come, if you just brush them away and do not pay them any attention at all, after some time they won't come any longer. But you must do this very persistently and regularly." (CWM 6: 329–330)

D. The past can be completely purified to the point of having no effect on the future, but mistakes must not be repeated

1. "So long as one repeats one's mistakes, nothing can be abolished, for one recreates them every minute. When someone makes a mistake, serious or not, this mistake has consequences in his life, a 'Karma' which must be exhausted, but the Divine Grace, if one turns to It, has the power of cutting off the consequences; but for this the fault must not be repeated. One shouldn't think one can continue to commit the same stupidities indefinitely and that indefinitely the Grace will cancel all the consequences, it does not happen like that! The past may be completely purified, cleansed, to the point of having no effect on the future, but on condition that one doesn't change it again into a perpetual present; you yourself must stop the bad vibration in yourself, you must not go on reproducing the same vibration indefinitely." (CWM 9: 58)

VI—Self-Surrender as the Process of Purification in Yoga

A. Put yourself in the Divine's hands, and the Divine will work out the impurities

1. "The principle of Adhyatmayoga [Spiritual Yoga] is, in knowledge, the realisation of all things that we see or do not see but are aware of, … as one divine Brahman, and in action and attitude, an absolute self-surrender to the Paratpara Purusha [greatest of the great purusha], the transcendent, infinite and universal Personality who is at once personal and impersonal, finite and infinite, self-limiting and illimitable, one and many, and informs with his being not only the Gods above, but man and the worm and the clod below. The surrender must be complete. Nothing must be reserved, no desire, no demand, no opinion, no idea that this must be, that cannot be, that this should be and that should not be;—all must be given. The heart must be purified of all desire, the intellect of all self-will, every duality must be renounced, the whole world seen and unseen must be recognised as one supreme expression of concealed Wisdom, Power and Bliss, and the entire being given up, as an engine is passive in the hands of the driver, for the divine Love, Might and perfect Intelligence to do its work and fulfil its divine Lila. … If this attitude of perfect self-surrender can be even imperfectly established, all

necessity of Yogic *kriyā* [specific practice] inevitably ceases. For then God himself in us becomes the sadhaka [one who practices a spiritual discipline] and the siddha [one perfect in the Yoga] and his divine power works in us, not by our artificial processes, but by a working of Nature which is perfectly informed, all-searching and infallibly efficient. Even the most powerful Rajayogic *saṁyama* [control], the most developed *prāṇāyāma*, [control by breathing exercises] the most strenuous meditation, the most ecstatic Bhakti, the most self-denying action, mighty as they are and efficacious, are comparatively weak in their results when set beside this supreme working. For those are all limited to a certain extent by our capacity, but this is illimitable in potency because it is God's capacity. It is only limited by his will which knows what is best for the world and for each of us in the world and apart from it." (CWSA 13: 73–74)

2. "The first process of the yoga is to make the *saṅkalpa* [determination] of *ātmasamarpaṇa* [self-surrender]. Put yourself with all your heart and all your strength into God's hands. Make no conditions, ask for nothing, not even for *siddhi* [yogic perfection] in the yoga, for nothing at all except that in you and through you his will may be directly performed. To those who demand from him, God gives what they demand, but to those who give themselves and demand nothing, he gives everything that they might

otherwise have asked or needed and in addition he gives himself and the spontaneous boons of his love." (CWSA 13: 74)

3. "The next process is to stand aside and watch the working of the divine power in yourself. This working is often attended with disturbance and trouble in the system, therefore faith is necessary, though perfect faith is not always possible at once; for whatever impurity is in you, harboured openly or secretly lurking, is likely to rise at first and be repeated so long as it is not exhaustively swept out, and doubt in this age is an almost universal impurity. But even when doubt assails, stand by and wait for it to pass, availing yourself if possible of the *satsaṅga* [association with spiritual people] of those who are already advanced on the path, but when that is absent, still holding fast to the principle of the yoga, self-surrender. When distressed within or assailed from without, remember the words of the Gita,

…

'By giving thyself up in heart and mind to Me, thou shalt cross over all difficulties and perils by My grace,' and again,

…

'Abandon all *dharmas* (all law, rule, means and codes of every kind whether formed by previous habit and belief or imposed from outside) and take refuge in Me alone; I will deliver thee from all sin and evil,—do not grieve.' 'I will

deliver',—you have not to be troubled or struggle yourself as if the responsibility were yours or the result depended on your efforts, a mightier than you is busy with the matter. Neither disease nor calamity nor the rising of sin and impurity in you should cause any alarm. Hold fast only to him. 'I will deliver thee from all sin and evil.' But the release does not come by a sudden miracle, it comes by a process of purification and these things are a part of the process. They are like the dust that rises in clouds when a room long uncleaned is at last swept out. Though the dust seem to choke you, yet persevere, *mā śucaḥ.* [Do not grieve]." (CWSA 13: 74–75)

4. "One great difficulty in these stages, … is the perception of the impurity of the *svabhāva*, [the nature proper to each being] the haunting idea of sin and virtue. You must always remember that, since you have put yourself in God's hands, he will work out the impurities and you have only to be careful, as you cannot be attached either to *pāpa* or *puṇya*, sin or virtue. For he has repeatedly given the *abhaya vacana*, [the word of assurance] the assurance of safety. '*Pratijānīhi'*, he says in the Gita, '*na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati*, he who is devoted to Me cannot perish'." (CWSA 13: 81)

5. "There are many wrong ideas current about surrender. Most people seem to look upon surrender as an abdication of the personality; but that is a grievous error. For the

individual is meant to manifest one aspect of the Divine Consciousness, and the expression of its characteristic nature is what creates his personality; then, by taking the right attitude towards the Divine, this personality is purified of all the influences of the lower nature which diminish and distort it and it becomes more strongly personal, more itself, more complete. The truth and power of the personality come out with a more resplendent distinctness, its character is more precisely marked than it could possibly be when mixed with all the obscurity and ignorance, all the dirt and alloy of the lower nature. It undergoes a heightening and glorification, an aggrandisement of capacity, a realization of the maximum of its possibilities. But to have this sublimating change, he must first give up all that, by distorting, limiting and obscuring the true nature, fetters and debases and disfigures the true personality; he must throw from him whatever belongs to the ignorant lower movements of the ordinary man and his blind limping ordinary life. And first of all he must give up his desires; for desire is the most obscure and the most obscuring movement of the lower nature." (CWM 3: 116–117)

B. The intense way of purification is the inner offering of the heart's adoration

1. "And this pilgrimage of ascension and this descent for the labour of transformation must be inevitably a battle, a long war with ourselves and with opposing forces around us which, while it lasts, may well seem interminable. For all our old obscure and ignorant nature will contend repeatedly and obstinately with the transforming Influence, supported in its lagging unwillingness or its stark resistance by most of the established forces of environing universal Nature; the powers and principalities and the ruling beings of the Ignorance will not easily give up their empire.

At first there may have to be a prolonged, often tedious and painful period of preparation and purification of all our being till it is ready and fit for an opening to a greater Truth and Light or to the Divine Influence and Presence. Even when centrally fitted, prepared, open already, it will still be long before all our movements of mind, life and body, all the multiple and conflicting members and elements of our personality consent or, consenting, are able to bear the difficult and exacting process of the transformation.

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

help most to convert what now seems difficult or impracticable into a thing possible and even sure. There takes place a coming to the front of some secret inmost soul within which was veiled by the restless activity of the mind, by the turbulence of our vital impulses and by the obscurity of the physical consciousness, the three powers which in their confused combination we now call our self. There will come about as a result a less impeded growth of a Divine Presence at the centre with its liberating Light and effective Force and an irradiation [sterilization, purification] of it into all the conscious and subconscious ranges of our nature. These are the two signs, one marking our completed conversion and consecration to the great Quest, the other the final acceptance by the Divine of our sacrifice." (CWSA 23: 132–133)

2. "It is the inner offering of the heart's adoration, the soul of it in the symbol, the spirit of it in the act, that is the very life of the sacrifice. If this offering is to be complete and universal, then a turning of all our emotions to the Divine is imperative. This is the intensest way of purification for the human heart, more powerful than any ethical or aesthetic catharsis could ever be by its half-power and superficial pressure." (CWSA 23: 165)

3. "245. If you leave it to God to purify, He will exhaust the evil in you subjectively; but if you insist on guiding yourself,

you will fall into much outward sin and suffering." (CWSA 12: 457)

4. "Self-surrender to the divine and infinite Mother, however difficult, remains our only effective means and our sole abiding refuge. Self-surrender to her means that our nature must be an instrument in her hands, the soul a child in the arms of the Mother." (CWSA 12: 171)

5. "Always keep in touch with the Divine Force. The best thing for you is to do that simply and allow it to do its own work; wherever necessary, it will take hold of the inferior energies and purify them; at other times it will empty you of them and fill you with itself. But if you let your mind take the lead and discuss and decide what is to be done, you will lose touch with the Divine Force and the lower energies will begin to act for themselves and all go into confusion and a wrong movement." (CWSA 29: 189)

C. Draw back and build a spiritual wall around oneself

1. "The working of the Divine Force in us under the conditions of the transition and the light of the psychic being turning us always towards a conscious and seeing obedience to that higher impulsion and away from the demands and instigations of the Forces of the Ignorance,

these between them create an ever progressive inner law of our action which continues till the spiritual and supramental can be established in our nature. In the transition there may well be a period in which we take up all life and action and offer them to the Divine for purification, change and deliverance of the truth within them, another period in which we draw back and build a spiritual wall around us admitting through its gates only such activities as consent to undergo the law of the spiritual transformation, a third in which a free and all-embracing action, but with new forms fit for the utter truth of the Spirit, can again be made possible." (CWSA 23: 138)

2. "In the first movement of self-preparation, the period of personal effort, the method we have to use is this concentration of the whole being on the Divine that it seeks and, as its corollary, this constant rejection, throwing out, *katharsis*, of all that is not the true Truth of the Divine. An entire consecration of all that we are, think, feel and do will be the result of this persistence. This consecration in its turn must culminate in an integral selfgiving to the Highest; for its crown and sign of completion is the whole nature's all-comprehending absolute surrender. In the second stage of the Yoga, transitional between the human and the divine working, there will supervene an increasing purified and vigilant passivity, a more and more luminous divine response to the Divine Force, but not to any other; and

there will be as a result the growing inrush of a great and conscious miraculous working from above. In the last period there is no effort at all, no set method, no fixed sadhana; the place of endeavour and tapasya will be taken by a natural, simple, powerful and happy disclosing of the flower of the Divine out of the bud of a purified and perfected terrestrial nature. These are the natural successions of the action of the Yoga." (CWSA 23: 87)

3. "We cannot, however, easily distinguish this true inner law of our being; it is kept screened from us so long as the heart and intellect remain unpurified from egoism: till then we follow superficial and impermanent ideas, impulses, desires, suggestions and impositions of all kinds from our environment or work out formations of our temporary mental, vital, physical personality—that passing experimental and structural self which has been made for us by an interaction between our being and the pressure of a lower cosmic Nature. In proportion as we are purified, the true being within declares itself more clearly; our will is less entangled in suggestions from outside or shut up in our own superficial mental constructions. Egoism renounced, the nature purified, action will come from the soul's dictates, from the depths or the heights of the spirit, or it will be openly governed by the Lord who was all the time seated secretly within our hearts. The supreme and final word of the Gita for the Yogin is that he should leave

all conventional formulas of belief and action, all fixed and external rules of conduct, all constructions of the outward or surface Nature, *dharmas*, and take refuge in the Divine alone. Free from desire and attachment, one with all beings, living in the infinite Truth and Purity and acting out of the profoundest deeps of his inner consciousness, governed by his immortal, divine and highest Self, all his works will be directed by the Power within through that essential spirit and nature in us which, knowing, warring, working, loving, serving, is always divine, towards the fulfilment of God in the world, an expression of the Eternal in Time." (CWSA 23: 274–275)

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

of alternations may easily be long in the integral Yoga; for there an entire perfection of the system is required; it must be capable at all times and in all conditions and all circumstances, whether of action or inaction, of admitting and then living in the consciousness of the supreme Truth. Nor is it enough for the sadhaka to have the utter realisation only in the trance of Samadhi or in a motionless quietude, but he must in trance or in waking, in passive reflection or energy of action be able to remain in the constant Samadhi of the firmly founded Brahmic consciousness. But if or when our conscious being has become sufficiently pure and clear, then there is a firm station in the higher consciousness." (CWSA 23: 364–365)

5. "All Yoga proceeds in its method by three principles of practice; first, purification, that is to say, the removal of all aberrations, disorders, obstructions brought about by the mixed and irregular action of the energy of being in our physical, moral and mental system; secondly, concentration, that is to say, the bringing to its full intensity and the mastered and self-directed employment of that energy of being in us for a definite end; thirdly, liberation, that is to say, the release of our being from the narrow and painful knots of the individualised energy in a false and limited play, which at present are the law of our nature. The enjoyment of our liberated being which brings us into

unity or union with the Supreme, is the consummation; it is that for which Yoga is done." (CWSA 23: 530)

D. One never risks making mistakes when one gives oneself to the Divine

1. "It is just because even in this field, the spiritual field, there are far too many people (I could say even the majority of those who take to the spiritual life and do yoga), far too many of these who do it for personal reasons, all kinds of personal reasons: some because they are disgusted with life, others because they are unhappy, others still because they want to know more, others because they want to become spiritually great, others because they want to learn things which they may be able to teach others; indeed there are a thousand personal reasons for taking up yoga. But the simple fact of giving oneself to the Divine so that the Divine takes you and makes of you what He wills, and this in all its purity and constancy, well, there are not many who do that and yet this indeed is the truth; and with this one goes straight to the goal and never risks making mistakes. But all the other motives are always mixed, tainted with ego; and naturally they can lead you here and there, very far from the goal also." (CWM 7: 190)

2. "But even if you must be the one and only being in the whole creation who gives himself integrally in all purity to the Divine, and being the only one, being naturally absolutely misunderstood by everybody, scoffed at, ridiculed, hated, even if you were that, there is no reason for not doing it. One must be either a tinsel actor or else a fool. Because others don't do it? But what does it matter whether they do it or not? 'Why, the whole world may go the wrong way, it does not concern me. There is only one thing with which I am concerned, to go straight. What others do, how is it my concern? It is their business, not mine'." (CWM 7: 197)

3. "One must have a great purity and a great intensity in one's self-giving, and that absolute trust in the supreme wisdom of the divine Grace, that It knows better than we do what is good for us, and all that. Then if one offers one's aspiration to It, truly gives it with enough intensity, the results are marvellous. But one must know how to see them, for when things are realised most people find it absolutely natural, they don't even see why and how it has happened, and they tell themselves, 'Yes, naturally it had to be like that.' So they lose the joy of... the joy of gratitude, because, in the last analysis, if one can be filled with gratitude and thanksgiving for the divine Grace, it puts the finishing touch, and at each step one comes to see that

things are exactly what they had to be and the best that could be." (CWM 7: 239)

4. "It's not the head which has wings: it's the heart. It's this... yes, this inevitable need. Nothing else counts. That's everything. Only that.

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.

…

(*Silence*)

Note that I am not speaking of what men call joy, which is not even a caricature, which, I think, is a diabolic

invention in order to make one lose the way: the joy which comes from pleasure, from forgetfulness, from indifference.

(*Silence*)

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

5. "*Mother, when we come to you, we try to be at our best possible, that is, to have very good thoughts; but often, on the contrary, all the bad impulses, bad thoughts we had during the day come forward.*

That is perhaps so that you can get rid of them.

If they come, one can offer them and ask to be rid of them.

That perhaps is the reason, it is because the Consciousness acts for purification. It is no use at all hiding things and pushing them behind, like this, and imagining they are not there because one has put a veil in front. It is much better to see oneself as one is—provided one is ready to give up this way of being. If you come allowing all the bad movements to rise to the surface, to show themselves; if you offer them, if you say, 'Well, this is how I am', and if

at the same time you have the aspiration to be different, then this second of presence is extremely useful; you can, yes, in a few seconds receive the help you need to get rid of them; while if you come like a little saint and go away content, without having received anything, it is not very useful." (CWM 8: 307–308)

6. "All can be done by the Divine, the heart and nature purified, the inner consciousness awakened, the veils removed, if one gives oneself to the Divine with trust and confidence—and even if one cannot do so fully at once, yet the more one does so, the more the inner help and guidance comes and the contact and the experience of the Divine grows within. If the questioning mind becomes less active and humility and the will to surrender grow in you, this ought to be perfectly possible. No other strength and tapasya are then needed, but this alone." (CWSA 29: 69)

7. "What I wrote was in answer to your statement about your former idea of the Yoga that if one wanted the Divine, the Divine himself would take up the purifying of the heart and develop the sadhana and give the necessary experiences. I meant to say that it can and does happen in that way if one has trust and confidence in the Divine and the will to surrender. For such a taking up involves one's putting oneself in the hands of the Divine rather than trusting to one's own efforts alone and it implies one's

putting one's trust and confidence in the Divine and a progressive self-giving. It is in fact the principle of sadhana that I myself followed and it is the central part of the Yoga as I envisage it. It is, I suppose, what Ramakrishna meant by the method of the baby cat in his image. But all cannot follow that at once; it takes time for them to arrive at it—it grows most when the mind and vital fall quiet." (CWSA 29: 70)

E. An intense atmosphere of total surrender to the Divine can filter out all undesirables

1. "But, you see, in the world as it is, we are all interdependent. You cannot take in the air without taking in the vibrations, the countless vibrations produced by all kinds of movements and all kinds of people, and you must—if you want to remain intact—you must constantly act like a filter, as I was saying. That is to say, nothing that is undesirable should be allowed to enter, as when one goes to infected areas, one wears a mask over the face so that the air may be purified before one breathes it in. Well, something similar has to be done. One must have around oneself so intense an atmosphere in a *total* surrender to the Divine, so intensified around oneself that everything that passes through is automatically filtered. Anyhow, it is very useful in life, for there are—we spoke about this too—there are bad thoughts, bad wills, people who wish you ill,

who make formations. There are all kinds of absolutely undesirable things in the atmosphere. And so, if one must always be on the watch, looking around on all sides, one would think only of one thing, how to protect oneself. First of all, it is tiresome, and then, you see, it makes you waste much time. If you are well enveloped in this way, with this light, the light of a perfectly glad, totally sincere surrender, when you are enveloped with that, it serves you as a marvellous filter. Nothing that is altogether undesirable, nothing that has ill-will can pass through. So, automatically, these things return where they came from. If there is a conscious ill-will against you, it comes, but cannot pass; the door is closed, for it is open only to divine things, it is not open to anything else. So it returns very quietly to the source from where it came.

But all these things are... One can learn how to do them through a kind of study and science. But they can be done without any study or science provided the aspiration and surrender are absolute and total. If the aspiration and surrender are total, it is done automatically. But you must see to it that they are total; and besides, as I was saying just now, you become very clearly aware of it, for the moment they are not total, you are no longer happy. You feel uneasy, very miserable, dejected, a bit unhappy: 'Things are not quite pleasant today. They are the same as they were yesterday; yesterday they were marvellous, today they are not pleasing!'—Why? Because yesterday

you were in a perfect state of surrender, more or less perfect—and today you aren't any more. So, what was so beautiful yesterday is no longer beautiful today. That joy you had within you, that confidence, the assurance that all will be well and the great Work will be accomplished, that certitude—all this, you see, has become veiled, has been replaced by a kind of doubt and, yes, by a discontent: 'Things are not beautiful, the world is nasty, people are not pleasant.' It goes sometimes to this length: 'The food is not good, yesterday it was excellent.' It is the same but today it is not good! This is the barometer! You may immediately tell yourself that an insincerity has crept in somewhere. It is very easy to know, you don't need to be very learned, for, as Sri Aurobindo has said in *Elements of Yoga*: One knows whether one is happy or unhappy, one knows whether one is content or discontented, one doesn't need to ask oneself, put complicated questions for this, one knows it!—Well, it is very simple.

The moment you feel unhappy, you may write beneath it: 'I am not sincere!' These two sentences go together:

'I FEEL UNHAPPY.'

'I AM NOT SINCERE.'

Now, what is it that is wrong? Then one begins to take a look, it is easy to find out..." (CWM 6: 214–215)

2. "This complete self-surrender must be the chief mainstay of the sadhaka because it is the only way, apart from complete quiescence and indifference to all action,—and that has to be avoided,—by which the absolute calm and peace can come." (CWSA 24: 723)

VII—The Psychic Force Can Be Relied upon for the Preliminary Purification of the Lower Nature

1. "But for the present the psychic is the force that may be relied on for the preliminary purification of the lower nature." (CWSA 30: 388)

2. "The psychic as it grows and manifests detects immediately all wrong movements or elements and at the same time supplies almost automatically the true element or movement which will replace them—this psychic process is much easier and more effective than that of a severe tapasya of purification." (CWSA 31: 237)

3. "The psychic is the Divine element in the individual being and its characteristic power is to turn everything towards the Divine, to bring a fire of purification, aspiration, devotion, true light of discernment, feeling, will, action which transforms by degrees the whole nature." (CWSA 30: 465)

4. "... the psychic purifying the mind and the vital of all wrong desire." (CWSA 32: 400)

5. "What the psychic realisation does bring is a psychic change of the nature purifying it and turning it altogether towards the Divine." (CWSA 35: 172)

6. "Naturally he who has mastered himself, who has found his psychic being, who lives constantly in the consciousness of this psychic being, who has established a perfect relation or at least a constant relation with the inner divine Presence is enveloped in an atmosphere of knowledge, light, beauty, purity, which is the best of all protections against desires, but all the same it is possible for desire to intrude if one is not always on one's guard, because we say that it comes from outside. One may have overcome a desire within oneself, and yet it may come from outside as a contagion; but through this envelope of light, knowledge and purity, the desire loses its force and instead of coming like a movement which evokes a blind and immediate response, one perceives what is happening, becomes aware of the force which wants to enter and one can quietly—when it is not wanted—make an inner movement and reject the incoming desire." (CWM 4: 324)

7. "What the psychic realisation does bring is a psychic change of the nature purifying it and turning it altogether towards the Divine." (CWSA 29: 499)

8. "And yet the true emotive soul, the real psyche in us, is not a desire-soul, but a soul of pure love and delight; but that, like the rest of our true being, can only emerge when the deformation created by the life of desire is removed from the surface and is no longer the characteristic action

of our being. To get that done is a necessary part of our purification, liberation, perfection." (CWSA 24: 649)

VIII—Throw Each Defect into the Psychic Fire, the Fire of Purification

1. "The psychic fire is the fire of aspiration, purification and tapasya which comes from the psychic being. It is not the psychic being, but a power of the psychic being." (CWSA 30: 368)

2. "The experience of the Fire is quite correct,—it is the great fire of purification and concentration (i.e. gathering up of the consciousness and turning it fixedly towards the Divine), the psychic fire which all must pass through so as to reach the Mother permanently and completely." (CWSA 30: 369)

3. "It is the Agni fire that you feel. Agni is at once a fire of aspiration, a fire of purification, a fire of tapasya, a fire of transformation." (CWSA 30: 371)

4. "*Sweet Mother, Sri Aurobindo writes: 'A psychic fire within must be lit into which all is thrown with the Divine Name upon it.' The Synthesis of Yoga*

Isn't the psychic fire always lit?

It is not always lit.

Then how to light it?

By aspiration.

By the will for progress, by the urge towards perfection.

Above all, it is the will for progress and self-purification which lights the fire. The will for progress. Those who have a strong will, when they turn it towards spiritual progress and purification, automatically light the fire within themselves." (CWM 8: 251)

5. "And each defect one wants to cure or each progress one wants to make—if all that is thrown into the fire, it burns with a new intensity. And this is not an image, it is a fact in the subtle physical. One can feel the warmth of the flame, one can see in the subtle physical the light of the flame. And when there is something in the nature which prevents one from advancing and one throws it into this fire, it begins to burn and the flame becomes more intense." (CWM 8: 251)

6. "*Into the fire all desires, all attachment, all impurity, all imperfection, as fuel*.

Yes, that is good. This movement should be constantly renewed." (CWM 17: 126)

7. "The outer consciousness finds it difficult to keep the fire of aspiration burning always with the same intensity. But with your will you must watch over the purifying fire and revive it when it fails." (CWM 17: 141)

8. "Agni is the will for progress, the flame of purification that burns up all obstacles and difficulties." (CWM 17: 146)

9. "Q: I saw a fire in my heart and my offering falling into it like bits of paper. I heard someone say: 'Offer everything into the fire!' But when obscurities and resistance arise, I feel a hesitation to offer them to the Mother. The thought comes: offer the best things to the Mother, not ugly things.

A: The fire is the purifying psychic fire. Offering to the psychic fire is not contrary to the worship of the Mother. To purify all in the psychic fire rather than throw the obscurities and resistance on the Mother is obviously the right way." (CWSA 32: 137)

10. "The fear of the fire you saw is misplaced, for it is the fire of the purifying Agni that you see burning and that does no harm; it only clears away what should not be there. That is why it is followed by a lightness or an emptiness. You have only to be quiet and let the fire do its work. The heat one feels at that time is not the heat of

fever or any other morbid heat. Afterwards, as you felt, all becomes cool and light." (CWSA 30: 372)

11. (*After a slight bout of fever:*)

Mother, I feel as if the heat in my body comes from the fire of purification. Is this true?

The fire of purification ought to purify without causing fever, and it is quite possible to be purified without falling ill." (CWM 15: 161)

12. "*You say that You kindle that fire in me—then why do the falsehood and obscurity still exist?*

An integral purification is a long and slow labour." (CWM 17: 105)

IX—The Divine Purity and Higher Consciousness Are Above, Waiting to Descend in Us

1. "The Divine presence, calm, peace, purity, force, light, joy, wideness are above, waiting to descend in you. Find this quietude behind and your mind also will become quieter and through the quiet mind you can call down the descent first of the purity and peace and then of the Divine Force. If you can feel this peace and purity descending into you, you can then call it down again and again till it begins to settle; you will feel too the Force working in you to change the movements and transform the consciousness. In this working you will be aware of the presence and power of the Mother. Once that is done, all the rest will be a question of time and of the progressive evolution in you of your true and divine nature." (CWSA 31: 741)

2. "The higher consciousness in descending brings peace and purity into all the inner parts; the inner being separates itself from the imperfect outer consciousness and at the same time the peace that comes carries in it a power which can throw out what contradicts the peace and purity. Ego can then slowly or swiftly but surely disappear—rajas and tamas change into their divine substitutes." (CWSA 31: 237)

3. "Afterwards or concurrently we have to spiritualise the being in its entirety by a descent of a divine Light, Force, Purity, Knowledge, freedom and wideness." (CWSA 23: 282)

4. "... and also to bring down from above the peace, wideness, purity etc. of the higher Self which is that of the Mother's consciousness." (CWSA 29: 77)

5. "Why should it [*a sense of purity in the being*] be an imagination? When the higher consciousness touches it creates so long as it is there an essential purity in which all parts of the being can share. Or, even if the exterior being does not share actively in it, it may fall quiescent so that there is nothing to interfere with the whole inner being realising the truth of a certain experience. The state does not last because it is only a preparatory touch, not the full or permanent descent; but while it is there it is real." (CWSA 30: 443)

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

higher consciousness into the lower nature." (CWSA 28: 66)

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

8. "Peace and purity of the consciousness are the very foundation of the necessary change in the nature." (CWSA 29: 123)

9. "Light or rays of light are always light of the higher consciousness working in the being to illumine or to purify or to awaken the consciousness or attune it to the Truth." (CWSA 30: 118)

10. "Q: When I called down the Purity from above, the whole being was filled with Peace and Purity and I felt the

Mother's Presence in the heart. An intense aspiration rose from the heart, from below, in fact, from all parts of the being. The heart was filled with adoration for the Mother; there was devotion and genuine surrender.

A: That is one of the most important things for the psychic opening and the inner relation to the Mother.

Q: I pray for Purity and Peace above all. With these I am sure of union with the Mother. Am I not correct?

A: Yes.

Q: I pray for your observations regarding this psychic experience. Was it not psychic?

A: Yes, certainly, it was a psychic opening and at the point emphasised, which is very important—the opening to the higher Purity." (CWSA 32: 470–471)

X—Unify the Different Planes of Our Being and Put Them in Harmony for Purity

1. "I have met many people who were trying this method of detachment and separation from life, and living exclusively in the inner reality. These people, almost all of them, had in the outer life absolutely gross defects. When they returned to the ordinary consciousness, they were very much lower than one of the elite, for instance, a man of great culture and great intellectual and moral development. These people in their ordinary conduct, when they came out of their meditation, their exclusive concentration, lived very grossly. They had very, very ordinary defects, you see. I knew many of this kind. Or perhaps they had come to a stage where their outer life was a sort of dream in which they were, so to say, not existing. But one had altogether the impression of beings who were completely incomplete, totally incomplete, that is, outwardly there was nothing at all.

But if in the outer consciousness one is very low, how can one meditate? It becomes very difficult, doesn't it?

Yes, very difficult!

Then how do these people succeed?

But they came out of it completely, they left it as one takes off a cloak, then they put it aside and entered another part of their being. And this is what happened exactly, it was as though they took away this consciousness, laid it aside and entered another part of their being. And in their meditation, as long as they remained there, it was very good. But these people, most of them, when in that state, were in a kind of samadhi, and they could not even speak; and so when they came back and returned to the ordinary consciousness, it was just where it was before, completely unchanged; there was no contact.

You see, what makes the thing difficult for you to understand is that you *don't know* concretely, practically, that there are... different planes of your being, as of all beings, which may not have any contact among themselves, and that one may very well pass from one plane to another, and live in a certain consciousness, leaving the other absolutely asleep. And moreover, even in activity, at different times different states of being enter into activity, and unless one takes the greatest care to unify them, put them all in harmony, one of them may pull from one side, another from the other, and a third pull from the third, and all of them be absolutely in contradiction with one another.

There are people who in a certain state of being are constructive, for example, and capable of organising their life and doing very useful work, and in another part of their

being they are absolutely destructive and constantly demolish what the other has constructed. I knew quite a number of people of this kind who, apparently had a rather incoherent life, but it was because the two parts of the being, instead of completing each other and harmonising in a synthesis, were separated and in opposition, and one undid what the other did, and all the time they passed like this from one to the other. They had a disorganised life. And there are more people of this kind than one would think!

There are very outstanding examples, striking ones, so clear and distinct they are; but less totally opposed conditions, though all the same in opposition to one another, occur very, very often. Besides, one has oneself the experience, when one has tried to make progress; there is one part of the being which participates in the effort and makes progress, and suddenly, without rhyme or reason, all the effort one has made, all the consciousness one has gained, capsizes in something which is quite different, opposed, over which one has no control.

Some people can make an effort the whole day through, succeed in building something within themselves; they go to sleep at night and the next morning all that they had done on the previous day is lost, they have lost it in a state of unconsciousness. This happens very often, these are not exceptional cases, far from it. And this is what

explains, you see, why some people—when they withdraw into their higher mind for instance—can enter into very deep meditation and be liberated from the things of this world, and then when they return to their ordinary physical consciousness, are absolutely ordinary if not even vulgar, because they haven't taken care to establish any contact, and to see that what is above acts and transforms what is below." (CWM 7: 290–292)

XI—One Purified Instrument Can Be Used as a Means for the Purification of Others

1. "We have to deal with the complex action of all these instruments and set about their purification. … But there is also the question where we are to begin. For the entanglement is great, the complete purification of one instrument depends on the complete purification too of all the others, and that is a great source of difficulty, disappointment and perplexity,—as when we think we have got the intelligence purified, only to find that it is still subject to attack and overclouding because the emotions of the heart and the will and sensational mind are still affected by the many impurities of the lower nature and they get back into the enlightened buddhi and prevent it from reflecting the pure truth for which we are seeking. But we have on the other hand this advantage that one important instrument sufficiently purified can be used as a means for the purification of the others, one step firmly taken makes easier all the others and gets rid of a host of difficulties." (CWSA 24: 654)

2. "At present we have to consider the purification of the normal being of man, preparatory to any such conversion, which leads to the liberation from the bonds of our lower nature." (CWSA 24: 653)

XII—The Entire Consciousness Must Be Purified, Not One Part at a Time

1. "In the old Chaldean tradition, very often the young novices were given an image when they were invested with the white robe; they were told: 'Do not try to remove the stains one by one, the whole robe must be purified.' Do not try to correct your faults one by one, to overcome your weaknesses one by one, it does not take you very far. The entire consciousness must be changed, a reversal of consciousness must be achieved, a springing up out of the state in which one is towards a higher state from which one dominates all the weaknesses one wants to heal, and from which one has a full vision of the work to be accomplished.

I believe Sri Aurobindo has said this: things are such that it may be said that nothing is done until everything is done. One step ahead is not enough, a total conversion is necessary.

How many times have I heard people who were making an effort say, 'I try, but what's the use of my trying? Every time I think I have gained something, I find that I must begin all over again.' This happens because they are trying to go forward while standing still, they are trying to progress without changing their consciousness. It is the entire point of view which must be shifted, the whole consciousness must get out of the rut in which it lies so as

to rise up and see things from above. It is only thus that victories will not be changed into defeats.” (CWM 8: 402)

XIII—Purification Is the Condition for Freedom from the Lower Nature

1. "The purification of the mental being and the psychic prana … prepares the ground for a spiritual liberation. *Śuddhi* is the condition for *mukti*. All purification is a release, a delivery; for it is a throwing away of limiting, binding, obscuring imperfections and confusions: purification from desire brings the freedom of the psychic prana, purification from wrong emotions and troubling reactions the freedom of the heart, purification from the obscuring limited thought of the sense mind the freedom of the intelligence, purification from mere intellectuality the freedom of the gnosis. But all this is an instrumental liberation. The freedom of the soul, mukti, is of a larger and more essential character; it is an opening out of mortal limitation into the illimitable immortality of the Spirit." (CWSA 24: 674)

2. "Purification and freedom are the indispensable antecedents of perfection." (CWSA 24: 691)

3. "We shall give to the idea of liberation, *mukti*, only the connotation of that inner change which is common to all experience of this kind, essential to perfection and indispensable to spiritual freedom. We shall find that it then implies always two things, a rejection and an assumption,

a negative and a positive side; the negative movement of freedom is a liberation from the principal bonds, the master-knots of the lower soul-nature, the positive side an opening or growth into the higher spiritual existence. But what are these master-knots—other and deeper twistings than the instrumental knots of the mind, heart, psychic life-force? We find them pointed out for us and insisted on with great force and a constant emphatic repetition in the Gita; they are four, desire, ego, the dualities and the three gunas of Nature; for to be desireless, ego-less, equal of mind and soul and spirit and *nistraiguṇya*, is in the idea of the Gita to be free, *mukta*. We may accept this description; for everything essential is covered by its amplitude. On the other hand, the positive sense of freedom is to be universal in soul, transcendently one in spirit with God, possessed of the highest divine nature,—as we may say, like to God, or one with him in the law of our being. This is the whole and full sense of liberation and this is the integral freedom of the spirit." (CWSA 24: 674–675)

XIV—Even After Liberation, One Has to Remain Vigilant

1. "It [the experience of liberation] is likely to be fundamental and definite. But in these matters, even after the liberation one has to remain vigilant—for often these things go out and remain at a far distance waiting to see if under any circumstances, in any condition they can make a rush and recover their kingdom. If there has been an entire purification down to the depths and nothing is there to open the gate, then they cannot do it. But it is only after one has been a long time free that one can say, 'Now it is all right for ever'." (CWSA 31: 709)

2. "*To aspire that the light from above may come and purify it?*

Obviously, but the problem remains. You aspire for a change, perhaps for a specific change; but the answer to your aspiration will not come immediately and in the meantime your nature will resist. Things happen like this: at a given moment the nature seems to have yielded and you think you have got the desired result. Your aspiration diminishes in intensity because you think you have the desired result. But the other fellow, who is very cunning and is waiting quietly in his corner, when you are off your

guard, he springs up like a jack-in-the-box, and then you must begin all over again." (CWM 4: 179)

3. "In the purification of the physical nature, more even than in the rest, it is not safe to assume that there will be no more attacks of old forces or habits of the nature—till the thing is actually and unmistakably done. One must remain vigilant till there is the full siddhi. For in the physical, habit, memory, mechanical response have an immense power of survival—therefore a return of old vibrations or formations is always possible. Only when there is the full purification and transformation is there the perfect security." (CWSA 31: 405)

4. "If you want to cure yourself of a defect or a difficulty, there is but one method: to be perfectly vigilant, to have a very alert and vigilant consciousness. First you must see very clearly what you want to do. You must not hesitate, be full of doubt and say, 'Is it good to do this or not, does this come into the synthesis or should it not come in?' You will see that if you trust your mind, it will always shuttle back and forth: it vacillates all the time. If you take a decision it will put before you all the arguments to show you that your decision is not good, and you will be tossed between the 'yes' and 'no', the black and white, and will arrive at nothing. Hence, first, you must know exactly what you want—know, not mentally, but through concentration,

through aspiration and a very conscious will. That is the important point. Afterwards, gradually, by observation, by a sustained vigilance, you must realise a sort of method which will be personal to you—it is useless to convince others to adopt the same method as yours, for that won't succeed. Everyone must find his own method, everyone must have his own method, and to the extent you put into practice your method, it will become clearer and clearer, more and more precise. You can correct a certain point, make clear another, etc. So, you start working.... For a while, all will go well. Then, one day, you will find yourself facing an insurmountable difficulty and will tell yourself, 'I have done all that and look, everything is as bad as before!' Then, in this case, you must, through a yet more sustained concentration, open an inner door in you and bring into this movement a force which was not there formerly, a state of consciousness which was not there before. And there, there will be a power, when your own personal power will be exhausted and no longer effective. When the personal power runs out ordinary people say, 'That's good, I can no longer do anything, it is finished.' But I tell you that when you find yourself before this wall, it is the beginning of something new. By an obstinate concentration, you must pass over to the other side of the wall and there you will find a new knowledge, a new force, a new power, a new help, and you will be able to work out

a new system, a new method which surely will take you very far.

I do not say this to discourage you; only, things happen like that. And the worst of all is to get discouraged when it happens. You must tell yourself, 'With the means of transport at my disposal I have reached a certain point, but these means do not allow me to go further. What should I do?... Sit there and not stir any longer?—not at all. I must find other means of transport.' This will happen quite often, but after a while you will get used to it. You must sit down for a moment, meditate, and then find other means. You must increase your concentration, your aspiration and your trust and with the new help which comes to you, make a new programme, work out other means to replace those you have left behind. This is how one progresses stage by stage.

But you must take great care to apply at each stage, as perfectly as possible, what you have gained or learnt. If you remain in an indrawn state of consciousness and do not apply materially the inner progress, a time will certainly come when you will not be able to move at all, for your outer being, unchanged, will be like a fetter pulling you back and hindering you from advancing. So, the most important point (what everybody says but only a few do) is to put into practice what you know. With that you have a good chance of succeeding, and with perseverance you will certainly get there.

You must never get discouraged when you find yourself before a wall, never say, 'Oh! What shall I do? It is still there.' In this way the difficulty will still be there and still there and still there, till the very end. It is only when you reach the goal that everything will suddenly crumble down." (CWM 4: 180–181)

XV—Other Methods of Purification

A. Have faith

1. "When you have the faith that this will make you progress, is going to purify you, it does you good." (CWM 7: 62)

B. Recognise one's faults honestly

1. "And the last consolation. For those who are truly sincere, truly good-willed, all these fits can be changed into a means for progress. Each time that you have an attack of this kind, a sort of storm, you can change the crisis into a new progress, into one more step towards the goal. If precisely you have the necessary sincerity to look straight in the face, within you, at the cause of the fit—the wrong you have done, the wrong you have thought, the wrong you have felt—if you see the weakness, the violence or the vanity (for I forgot to tell you that the vital is much more full of vanity than the mind), if you look at all that full in the face and if you recognise honestly and sincerely that what has happened is due to your fault, then you are able to put a red-hot iron as it were on the affected spot. You can purify the weakness and turn it into a new consciousness. And you find after the storm that you have

grown a little more, you have truly made a progress." (CWM 4: 52)

C. Write a letter to the Mother

1. "Sometimes it is easier when you write it down; you imagine that I am there and then take a paper and write on it what you wanted to tell me. Then just the very fact of formulating it clearly sometimes gives you the true picture of the situation and you can have the answer more easily. It depends, sometimes it is necessary, sometimes not, but if you are in a confusion, a kind of whirlwind, above all, if there is a vital upsurge, the fact of compelling yourself to put it on paper already quietens you, it begins the work of purification.

In fact, one should always do this, when he feels that he is caught by an impulse of some kind or other, particularly impulses of anger. If one takes as an absolute discipline, instead of acting or speaking (because speech is an action), instead of acting under the impulse, if one withdraws and then does as I said, one sits down quietly, concentrates and then looks at his anger quietly, one writes it down, when one has finished writing, it is gone—in any case, most often." (CWM 7: 106)

D. The safest way is to remain in the higher part of the consciousness and put pressure from there on the lower to change

1. "If you go down into your lower parts or ranges of nature, you must be always careful to keep a vigilant connection with the higher already regenerated levels of the consciousness and to bring down the Light and Purity through them into these nether still unregenerated regions. If there is not this vigilance, one gets absorbed in the unregenerated movement of the inferior layers and there is obscuration and trouble.

The safest way is to remain in the higher part of the consciousness and put a pressure from it on the lower to change. It can be done in this way, only you must get the knack and the habit of it. If you achieve the power to do that, it makes the progress much easier, smoother and less painful." (CWSA 31: 636)

2. "The safest way is precisely not to go down, it is to remain above and from there to put a pressure on what is below. But if you go down it is very difficult to keep the contact with what is above; so if one forgets one can do nothing, one becomes like the part into which one has gone down. So, as it is something very difficult to do, on the contrary, it is better to remain in one's higher

consciousness and from there act upon the lower movements without going down into them.

For example, it is as when one feels anger rising up from the subconscient; well, if one wants to control it one must be very careful not to be identified with it. One must not go down into it. One must remain in one's consciousness, above, quiet, peaceful, and from there look at this anger and put the light and quietude upon it so that it calms down and vanishes. But if one gets identified with it, one is also in anger, one can't change it." (CWM 7: 113)

3. "The divine Force will not act in this way; it will work first to purify, to widen and enlighten and transform the consciousness, to open it to Light and Truth, to awaken the heart and the psychic being. Only afterwards will it take gradual and quiet control through a pure and conscious surrender." (CWSA 30: 199)

E. By renunciation of all egoistic aims, the mind and the will are purified

1. "The Path of Works aims at the dedication of every human activity to the supreme Will. It begins by the renunciation of all egoistic aim for our works, all pursuit of action for an interested aim or for the sake of a worldly result. By this renunciation it so purifies the mind and the will that we become easily conscious of the great universal

Energy as the true doer of all our actions and the Lord of that Energy as their ruler and director with the individual as only a mask, an excuse, an instrument or, more positively, a conscious centre of action and phenomenal relation." (CWSA 23: 39–40)

2. "In human egoism and its satisfaction there can be no divine culmination and deliverance. A certain purification from egoism is the condition even of ethical progress and elevation, for social good and perfection; much more is it indispensable for inner peace, purity and joy. But a much more radical deliverance, not only from egoism but from ego-idea and ego-sense, is needed if our aim is to raise human into divine nature." (CWSA 23: 357)

F. Work done with the right attitude is the easiest means to purify the nature

1. "But to quiet the mind and get the spiritual experience it is necessary first to purify and prepare the nature. This sometimes takes many years. Work done with the right attitude is the easiest means for that—i.e. work done without desire or ego, rejecting all movements of desire, demand or ego when they come, done as an offering to the Divine Mother, with the remembrance of her and prayer to her to manifest her force and take up the action

so that there too and not only in inner silence you can feel her presence and working." (CWSA 29: 226)

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

3. "The personal will of the sadhaka has first to seize on the egoistic energies and turn them towards the light and the right; once turned, he has still to train them to recognise that always, always to accept, always to follow that. Progressing, he learns, still using the personal will, personal effort, personal energies, to employ them as representatives of the higher Power and in conscious obedience to the higher Influence. Progressing yet farther, his will, effort, energy become no longer personal and separate, but activities of that higher Power and Influence at work in the individual. But there is still a sort of gulf or distance which necessitates an obscure process of transit, not always accurate, sometimes even very distorting,

between the divine Origin and the emerging human current. At the end of the process, with the progressive disappearance of egoism and impurity and ignorance, this last separation is removed; all in the individual becomes the divine working." (CWSA 23: 60–61)

G. Peace helps purity

1. "Peace helps to purity—since in peace disturbing influences cease and the essence of purity is to respond only to the Divine Influence and not to have an affinity with other movements." (CWSA 29: 48)

H. Silence can receive the force which purifies and alleviates many impurities

1. "*Can silence bring all the force needed for purification and transformation?*

Not exactly *bring*, but in silence one can receive it." (CWM 17: 106)

2. "*Can all the impurities of the mind, vital and physical disappear by the descent of this silence?*

Silence cannot cure all the impurities, but it alleviates a great many of them." (CWM 17: 20)

I. Call the Mother to purify your being and change your nature

1. "Sri Aurobindo says in reply to your letter that you can meditate on the Mother in the heart and call on her—remember her and dedicate or offer to her all your life and thoughts and actions. If you like you can make a japa of her name. You can call to her to purify your being and change your nature." (CWSA 32: 154–155)
Written by Sri Aurobindo to his secretary, who replied to the enquirer.

2. "*Sweet Mother, when one has a difficulty in the day and it is not possible to see you or tell you about it, what should one do?*

If it is not at all possible, you must sit quite alone, try to become silent, call, call me as though I were there, make me come and put the difficulty before me absolutely sincerely and objectively; and then remain very silent, very quiet and wait for the result.

And I think the result comes. For it depends on the nature of the difficulty. If it is a problem that's to be solved, then the solution comes; if it is an inner movement, something that has gone wrong, then usually if one does this very sincerely, well, it is put back in its place; and if it is a decision that's to be taken, if it is something one

doesn't know whether one must do or not do, then this too, if one is very quiet one knows whether it's a yes or no; it comes: 'Yes' or 'No'. Then here you must not discuss any more, the mind must not say, 'But if...? and then...', for then everything becomes foggy. You must say, 'Good!' and follow like this. But for this you must be sincere, in the sense that you must have no preferences.

If the difficulty comes from one part of the being wanting one thing and another part of the being knowing that one must not have it, then it becomes complicated because the part which wants can try to introduce its own will into the answer. So when one sits down, first one must begin by persuading it to make a little act of sincere surrender, and it is here that one can make true progress, saying, 'Now I am conscious that it is this that I desire, but I am ready to give up my desire if that should be done.' But you must do this not only in the head, it must be done sincerely, and then you proceed as I said. Then one knows—knows what's to be done." (CWM 7: 105–106)

J. Inward essential rejection is a spiritual purification

1. "The difference between suppression and an inward essential rejection is the difference between mental or moral control and a spiritual purification." (CWSA 31: 265)

K. If one lives in the impersonal Self, one grows in purity

1. "If, however, you practise living in the impersonal Self and can achieve a certain spiritual impersonality, then you grow in equality, purity, peace, detachment, you get the power of living in an inner freedom not touched by the surface movement or struggle of the mental, vital and physical nature, and this becomes a great help when you have to go beyond the impersonal and to change the troubled nature also into something divine." (CWSA 28: 12)

L. Pray for purification

"It is better for him to pray for purification, knowledge, intensity of the heart's aspiration and as much working of the Power as he can bear and assimilate." (CWSA 30: 459)

M. By wanting purity and always aspiring for purity, one can be free from the slightest stain of human impurity

"*Mother, tell me how I can keep Your service holy and free from the slightest stain of human impurity.*

By wanting it and always aspiring for it." (CWM 14: 149)

N. Spirituality can purify and uplift, by the inner influence, the outward nature of human beings

"... spirituality liberates and illumines the inner being, it helps mind to communicate with what is higher than itself, to escape even from itself, it can purify and uplift by the inner influence the outward nature of individual human beings: but so long as it has to work in the human mass through mind as the instrument, it can exercise an influence on the earth-life but not bring about a transformation of that life." (CWM 9: 418)

XVI—Purification Takes Time Because Something in the Nature Responds to Disturbance

1. "The persistence of trouble, *aśānti*, the length of time taken for this purification and perfection, itself must not be allowed to become a reason for discouragement and impatience. It comes because there is still something in the nature which responds to it, and the recurrence of trouble serves to bring out the presence of the defect, put the sadhaka upon his guard and bring about a more enlightened and consistent action of the will to get rid of it. When the trouble is too strong to be kept out, it must be allowed to pass and its return discouraged by a greater vigilance and insistence of the spiritualised buddhi. Thus persisting, it will be found that these things lose their force more and more, become more and more external and brief in their recurrence, until finally calm becomes the law of the being. This rule persists so long as the mental buddhi is the chief instrument; but when the supramental light takes possession of mind and heart, then there can be no trouble, grief or disturbance; for that brings with it a spiritual nature of illumined strength in which these things can have no place. There the only vibrations and emotions are those which belong to the *ānandamaya* nature of divine unity." (CWSA 24: 723–724)

2. "There is always a double nature in human beings, the inner (psychic and spiritual) which is in touch with the Divine; the outer, mental, vital and physical, which has been brought up in the Ignorance and is full of defects, imperfections and impurities. It is for this reason that in sadhana things cannot be changed in a moment. The inner experience grows and extends and fills more and more of the nature, but till all is filled, the imperfections remain somewhere." (CWSA 28: 89–90)

3. "The difficulties you find in the spiritual progress are common to us all. In this Yoga the progress is always attended with these relapses into the ordinary mentality until the whole being is so remoulded that it can no longer be affected either by any downward tendency in our own nature or by the impressions from the discordant world outside or even by the mental state of those associated with us most closely in the Yoga. … Still I have always found that when I recover from one of these recoils, it is always with a new spiritual gain which might have been neglected or missed if I had remained securely in my former state of partial satisfaction. Especially, as I have long had the map of my advance sketched out before me, I am able to measure my progress at each step and the particular losses are compensated for by the clear consciousness of the general advance that has been made. The final goal is far but the progress made in the face of

so constant and massive an opposition is the guarantee of its being gained in the end. But the time is in other hands than ours. Therefore I have put impatience and dissatisfaction far away from me.

An absolute equality of the mind and heart and a clear purity and calm strength in all the members of the being have long been the primary condition on which the Power working in me has insisted with an inexhaustible patience and an undeviating constancy of will which rejects all the efforts of other powers to hasten forward to the neglect of these first requisites." (CWSA 36: 288–289)

XVII—The Purified Understanding Is the Most Potent Cleanser of the Turbid and Disordered Human Being

1. "The first necessity of preparation is the purifying of all the members of our being; especially, for the path of knowledge, the purification of the understanding, the key that shall open the door of Truth; and a purified understanding is hardly possible without the purification of the other members. An unpurified heart, an unpurified sense, an unpurified life confuse the understanding, disturb its data, distort its conclusions, darken its seeing, misapply its knowledge; an unpurified physical system clogs or chokes up its action. There must be an integral purity. Here also there is an interdependence; for the purification of each member of our being profits by the clarifying of every other, the progressive tranquillisation of the emotional heart helping for instance the purification of the understanding while equally a purified understanding imposes calm and light on the turbid and darkened workings of the yet impure emotions. It may even be said that while each member of our being has its own proper principles of purification, yet it is the purified understanding that in man is the most potent cleanser of his turbid and disordered being and most sovereignly imposes their right working on his other members. Knowledge, says the Gita, is the sovereign purity; light is

the source of all clearness and harmony even as the darkness of ignorance is the cause of all our stumblings. Love, for example, is the purifier of the heart and by reducing all our emotions into terms of divine love the heart is perfected and fulfilled; yet love itself needs to be clarified by divine knowledge. The heart's love of God may be blind, narrow and ignorant and lead to fanaticism and obscurantism; it may, even when otherwise pure, limit our perfection by refusing to see Him except in a limited personality and by recoiling from the true and infinite vision. The heart's love of man may equally lead to distortions and exaggerations in feeling, action and knowledge which have to be corrected and prevented by the purification of the understanding." (CWSA 23: 309)

2. "We must, however, consider deeply and clearly what we mean by the understanding and by its purification. We use the word as the nearest equivalent we can get in the English tongue to the Sanskrit philosophical term *buddhi*; therefore we exclude from it the action of the sense mind … Nor can we include that constant leaping current of habitual thought … Undoubtedly this is a sort of understanding which has been very useful in the development of man from the animal; but it is only one remove above the animal mind; it is a half-animal reason subservient to habit, to desire and the senses and is of no avail in the search whether for scientific or philosophical or

spiritual knowledge. We have to go beyond it; its purification can only be effected either by dismissing or silencing it altogether or by transmuting it into the true understanding.

By the understanding we mean that which at once perceives, judges and discriminates, the true reason of the human being not subservient to the senses, to desire or to the blind force of habit, but working in its own right for mastery, for knowledge. Certainly, the reason of man as he is at present does not even at its best act entirely in this free and sovereign fashion; but so far as it fails, it fails because it is still mixed with the lower half-animal action, because it is impure and constantly hampered and pulled down from its characteristic action. In its purity it should not be involved in these lower movements, but stand back from the object, and observe disinterestedly, put it in its right place in the whole by force of comparison, contrast, analogy, reason from its rightly observed data by deduction, induction, inference and holding all its gains in memory and supplementing them by a chastened and rightly-guided imagination view all in the light of a trained and disciplined judgment. Such is the pure intellectual understanding of which disinterested observation, judgment and reasoning are the law and characterising action." (CWSA 23: 309–311)

3. "For there is an intuitive mind in man which serves as a recipient and channel for these instreamings from a supramental faculty. But the action of intuition and inspiration in us is imperfect in kind as well as intermittent in action; ordinarily, it comes in response to a claim from the labouring and struggling heart or intellect and, even before its givings enter the conscious mind, they are already affected by the thought or aspiration which went up to meet them, are no longer pure but altered to the needs of the heart or intellect; and after they enter the conscious mind, they are immediately seized upon by the intellectual understanding and dissipated or broken up so as to fit in with our imperfect intellectual knowledge, or by the heart and remoulded to suit our blind or half-blind emotional longings and preferences, or even by the lower cravings and distorted to the vehement uses of our hungers and passions." (CWSA 23: 311)

4. "If this higher *buddhi* [intuitive mind] could act pure of the interference of these lower members, it would give pure forms of the truth; observation would be dominated or replaced by a vision which could see without subservient dependence on the testimony of the sense-mind and senses; imagination would give place to the self-assured inspiration of the truth, reasoning to the spontaneous discernment of relations and conclusion from reasoning to an intuition containing in itself those relations and not

building laboriously upon them, judgment to a thought-vision in whose light the truth would stand revealed without the mask which it now wears and which our intellectual judgment has to penetrate; while memory too would take upon itself that larger sense given to it in Greek thought and be no longer a paltry selection from the store gained by the individual in his present life, but rather the all-recording knowledge which secretly holds and constantly gives from itself everything that we now seem painfully to acquire but really in this sense remember, a knowledge which includes the future no less than the past. Certainly, we are intended to grow in our receptivity to this higher faculty of truth-conscious knowledge, but its full and unveiled use is as yet the privilege of the gods and beyond our present human stature." (CWSA 23: 311–312)

5. "We see then what we mean precisely by the understanding and by that higher faculty which we may call for the sake of convenience the ideal faculty and which stands to the developed intellect much in the same relation as that intellect stands to the half-animal reason of the undeveloped man. It becomes evident also what is the nature of the purification which is necessary before the understanding can fulfil rightly its part in the attainment of right knowledge." (CWSA 23: 312)

5. "Therefore right thought is a necessary preliminary, and once the habit of right thought is established, free from sense-error and desire and old association and intellectual prejudgment, the understanding becomes purified and offers no serious obstacle to the farther process of knowledge. Still, right thought only becomes effective when in the purified understanding it is followed by other operations, by vision, by experience, by realisation." (CWSA 23: 303)

XVIII—Three Causes of Impurity in the Understanding

A. The intermingling of desire in the thinking function

1. "The first cause of impurity in the understanding is the intermiscence [intermingling] of desire in the thinking functions, and desire itself is an impurity of the Will involved in the vital and emotional parts of our being. When the vital and emotional desires interfere with the pure will-to-know, the thought-function becomes subservient to them, pursues ends other than those proper to itself and its perceptions are clogged and deranged. The understanding must lift itself beyond the siege of desire and emotion and, in order that it may have perfect immunity, it must get the vital parts and the emotions themselves purified. The will to enjoy is proper to the vital being but not the choice or the reaching after the enjoyment which must be determined and acquired by higher functions; therefore the vital being must be trained to accept whatever gain or enjoyment comes to it in the right functioning of the life in obedience to the working of the divine Will and to rid itself of craving and attachment. Similarly the heart must be freed from subjection to the cravings of the life principle and the senses and thus rid itself of the false emotions of fear, wrath, hatred, lust, etc.

which constitute the chief impurity of the heart. The will to love is proper to the heart, but here also the choice and reaching after love have to be foregone or tranquillised and the heart taught to love with depth and intensity indeed, but with a calm depth and a settled and equal, not a troubled and disordered intensity. The tranquillisation and mastery of these members is a first condition for the immunity of the understanding from error, ignorance and perversion. This purification spells an entire equality of the nervous being and the heart; equality, therefore, even as it was the first word of the path of works, so also is the first word of the path of knowledge." (CWSA 23: 313)

B. The intermingling of the sense-mind in the thinking function

1. "The second cause of impurity in the understanding is the illusion of the senses and the intermiscence [intermingling] of the sense-mind in the thinking functions. No knowledge can be true knowledge which subjects itself to the senses or uses them otherwise than as first indices whose data have constantly to be corrected and overpassed. The beginning of Science is the examination of the truths of the world-force that underlie its apparent workings such as our senses represent them to be; the beginning of philosophy is the examination of the principles of things which the senses mistranslate to us; the

beginning of spiritual knowledge is the refusal to accept the limitations of the sense-life or to take the visible and sensible as anything more than phenomenon of the Reality.

Equally must the sense-mind be stilled and taught to leave the function of thought to the mind that judges and understands." (CWSA 23: 313–314)

C. Impurity in the understanding itself, consisting in an improper action of the will to know

1. "A third cause of impurity has its source in the understanding itself and consists in an improper action of the will to know. That will is proper to the understanding, but here again choice and unequal reaching after knowledge clog and distort. They lead to a partiality and attachment which makes the intellect cling to certain ideas and opinions with a more or less obstinate will to ignore the truth in other ideas and opinions, cling to certain fragments of a truth and shy against the admission of other parts which are yet necessary to its fullness, cling to certain predilections of knowledge and repel all knowledge that does not agree with the personal temperament of thought which has been acquired by the past of the thinker. The remedy lies in a perfect equality of the mind, in the cultivation of an entire intellectual rectitude and in the

perfection of mental disinterestedness. The purified understanding as it will not lend itself to any desire or craving, so will not lend itself either to any predilection or distaste for any particular idea or truth, and will refuse to be attached even to those ideas of which it is the most certain or to lay on them such an undue stress as is likely to disturb the balance of truth and depreciate the values of other elements of a complete and perfect knowledge." (CWSA 23: 314–315)

D. The higher knowledge-faculty comes through the intuitive mind

1. "An understanding thus purified would be a perfectly flexible, entire and faultless instrument of intellectual thought and being free from the inferior sources of obstruction and distortion would be capable of as true and complete a perception of the truths of the Self and the universe as the intellect can attain. But for real knowledge something more is necessary, since real knowledge is by our very definition of it supra-intellectual. In order that the understanding may not interfere with our attainment to real knowledge, we have to reach to that something more and cultivate a power exceedingly difficult for the active intellectual thinker and distasteful to his proclivities, the power of intellectual passivity. The object served is double

and therefore two different kinds of passivity have to be acquired.

In the first place we have seen that intellectual thought is in itself inadequate and is not the highest thinking; the highest is that which comes through the intuitive mind and from the supramental faculty. So long as we are dominated by the intellectual habit and by the lower workings, the intuitive mind can only send its messages to us subconsciously and subject to a distortion more or less entire before it reaches the conscious mind; or if it works consciously, then only with an inadequate rarity and a great imperfection in its functioning. In order to strengthen the higher knowledge-faculty in us we have to effect the same separation between the intuitive and intellectual elements of our thought as we have already effected between the understanding and the sense-mind; and this is no easy task, for not only do our intuitions come to us incrusted in the intellectual action, but there are a great number of mental workings which masquerade and ape the appearances of the higher faculty. The remedy is to train first the intellect to recognise the true intuition, to distinguish it from the false and then to accustom it, when it arrives at an intellectual perception or conclusion, to attach no final value to it, but rather look upward, refer all to the divine principle and wait in as complete a silence as it can command for the light from above. In this way it is possible to transmute a great part of our intellectual

thinking into the luminous truth conscious vision,—the ideal would be a complete transition,—or at least to increase greatly the frequency, purity and conscious force of the ideal knowledge working behind the intellect. The latter must learn to be subject and passive to the ideal faculty.

But for the knowledge of the Self it is necessary to have the power of a complete intellectual passivity, the power of dismissing all thought, the power of the mind to think not at all which the Gita in one passage enjoins. This is a hard saying for the occidental mind to which thought is the highest thing and which will be apt to mistake the power of the mind not to think, its complete silence for the incapacity of thought. But this power of silence is a capacity and not an incapacity, a power and not a weakness. It is a profound and pregnant stillness. Only when the mind is thus entirely still, like clear, motionless and level water, in a perfect purity and peace of the whole being and the soul transcends thought, can the Self which exceeds and originates all activities and becomings, the Silence from which all words are born, the Absolute of which all relativities are partial reflections manifest itself in the pure essence of our being. In a complete silence only is the Silence heard; in a pure peace only is its Being revealed. Therefore to us the name of That is the Silence and the Peace." (CWSA 23: 315–316)

XIX—In Integral Yoga, Spirit's Purity Is Not Moral Purity

1. "Moreover, it is a total purification of all the complex instrumentality in all the parts of each instrument that is demanded of us by the integral perfection. It is not, ultimately, the narrower moral purification of the ethical nature. Ethics deals only with the desire-soul and the active outward dynamical part of our being; its field is confined to character and action. It prohibits and inhibits certain actions, certain desires, impulses, propensities,—it inculcates certain qualities in the act, such as truthfulness, love, charity, compassion, chastity. When it has got this done and assured a base of virtue, the possession of a purified will and blameless habit of action, its work is finished. But the Siddha of the integral perfection has to dwell in a larger plane of the Spirit's eternal purity beyond good and evil. … But [by this phrase] … is meant that the Siddha of the active integral perfection will live dynamically in the working of the transcendent power of the divine Spirit as a universal will through the supermind individualised in him for action. His works will therefore be the works of an eternal Knowledge, an eternal Truth, an eternal Might, an eternal Love, an eternal Ananda; but the truth, knowledge, force, love, delight will be the whole essential spirit of whatever work he will do and will not depend on its form; they will determine his action from the

spirit within and the action will not determine the spirit or subject it to a fixed standard or rigid mould of working. He will have no dominant mere habit of character, but only a spiritual being and will with at the most a free and flexible temperamental mould for the action. His life will be a direct stream from the eternal fountains, not a form cut to some temporary human pattern. His perfection will not be a sattwic purity, but a thing uplifted beyond the gunas of Nature, a perfection of spiritual knowledge, spiritual power, spiritual delight, unity and harmony of unity; the outward perfection of his works will be freely shaped as the self-expression of this inner spiritual transcendence and universality. For this change he must make conscient [aware] in him that power of spirit and supermind which is now superconscient to our mentality. But that cannot work in him so long as his present mental, vital, physical being is not liberated from its actual inferior working. This purification is the first necessity." (CWSA 24: 644–645)

XX—The Seats of Impurity Are in the Mind, Heart, Vital, and the Life in the Body

1. "If there is to be an active perfection of our being, the first necessity is a purification of the working of the instruments which it now uses for a music of discords. The being itself, the spirit, the divine Reality in man stands in no need of purification; it is for ever pure, not affected by the faults of its instrumentation or the stumblings of mind and heart and body in their work, as the sun, says the Upanishad, is not touched or stained by the faults of the eye of vision. Mind, heart, the soul of vital desire, the life in the body are the seats of impurity; it is they that must be set right if the working of the spirit is to be a perfect working and not marked by its present greater or less concession to the devious pleasure of the lower nature. … Mind, heart, life, body are to do the works of the Divine, all the works which they do now and yet more, but to do them divinely, as now they do not do them. This is the first appearance of the problem before him on which the seeker of perfection has to lay hold, that it is not a negative, prohibitory, passive or quietistic, but a positive, affirmative, active purity which is his object. A divine quietism discovers the immaculate eternity of the Spirit, a divine kinetism adds to it the right pure undeviating action of the soul, mind and body." (CWSA 24: 643–644)

XXI—First Purify the Mind and Vital and Then the Body

A. Purifying the body comes only after entry into the higher life

1. "That is to say, in a greater or lesser proportion you swallow along with the meat a little of the consciousness of the animal you eat. It is not very serious, but it is not always very pleasant. And obviously it does not help you in being on the side of man rather than of the beast! …

This is to tell you that perhaps now it is time to change one's food and go over to something a little less bestial! It depends absolutely on each one's state of consciousness. For an ordinary man, living an ordinary life, having ordinary activities, not thinking at all of anything else except earning his living, of keeping himself fit and perhaps taking care of his family, it is good to eat meat, it is all right for him to eat anything at all, whatever agrees with him, whatever does him good.

But if one wishes to pass from this ordinary life to a higher one, the problem begins to become interesting; and if, after having come to a higher life, one tries to prepare oneself for the transformation, then it becomes very important. For there certainly are foods which help the body to become subtle and others which keep it in a state of animality. But it is only at that particular time that this

becomes very important, not before; and before reaching that moment, there are many other things to do. Certainly it is better to purify one's mind and purify one's vital before thinking of purifying one's body. For even if you take all possible precautions and live physically taking care not to absorb anything except what will help to subtilise your body, if your mind and vital remain in a state of desire, inconscience, darkness, passion and so on, that won't be of any use at all. Only, your body will become weak, dislocated from the inner life and one fine day it will fall ill.

One must begin from inside, I have already told you this once. One must begin from above, first purify the higher and then purify the lower. I am not saying that one must indulge in all sorts of degrading things in the body. That's not what I am telling you. Don't take it as an advice not to exercise control over your desires! It isn't that at all. But what I mean is, do not try to be an angel in the body if you are not already just a little of an angel in your mind and vital; for that would dislocate you in a different way from the usual one, but not one that is better. We said the other day that what is most important is to keep the equilibrium. Well, to keep the equilibrium everything must progress at the same time. You must not leave one part of your being in darkness and try to bring the other into light. You must take great care not to leave any corner dark." (CWM 6: 179–180)

B. Mental purity

1. "Mental purity: a mirror which does not distort." (CWM 14: 150)

2. "Perfect mental purity: a spotless mirror constantly turned towards the Divine." (CWM 14: 150)

3. "Freedom is the first requisite of full working power, the freedom of the higher from the lower. The mind must be free from the body if it is to be purified from the grossness which clogs its motions, the heart must be free from the obsessions of the body if love and high aspiration are to increase, the reason must be free from the heart and the lower mind if it is to reflect perfectly,—for the heart can inspire, it cannot think, it is a vehicle of direct knowledge coloured by emotion, not of ratiocination." (CWSA 12: 24)

4. "A pure mind means a mind quiet and free from thoughts of a useless or disturbing character." (CWSA 29: 49)

5. "But in the first place, if we have proceeded rightly on the path of our Yoga, we shall have attained to Self through a purified mind and heart, and a purified mind is one that is necessarily passive and open to the knowledge." (CWSA 23:370)

6. "Integral mental purity: silent, attentive, receptive, concentrated on the Divine—this is the path to purity." (CWM 14: 150)

7. "The higher mind in man is something other, loftier, purer, vaster, more powerful than the reason or logical intelligence." (CWSA 23: 79)

8. "*Then what does purity of thought mean?*

Inevitably a thought which expresses the truth is necessarily a thought which is pure, for otherwise it could not express the truth." (CWM 6: 344)

9. "X pretends to be pure and surrendered to the will of God. How can he be pure when his whole trouble has come from the indulgence of impure desires? He pretends to act according to God's will, but his actions are moved by three things, desire, vanity and self-will. The devil makes suggestions supported by one or another of these three motives and persuades him that it is the will of God.

Ignorance is not a state of innocence or purity; that is an old blunder. Only a consciousness full of light can be pure. For instance, when you are conscious, your mind is clear and you have the right ideas about things and people; your mind is pure of ignorance. But when the mind is clouded by some impurity,—say, anger, jealousy or pride

or some unreasonable desire,—you at once become ignorant and mistake and misunderstand everything.

…

This is what the Mother meant by purity; to be free from false ideas, ... is to be pure." (CWSA 29: 49)

10. "Remember first that an inner quietude, caused by the purification of the restless mind and vital, is the first condition of a secure sadhana. Remember, next, that to feel the Mother's presence while in external action is already a great step and one that cannot be attained without a considerable inner progress." (CWSA 29: 138)

11. "Nor must this instrumental importance be allowed to assume the proportions of a necessity; we must not for instance imagine that the purity of the mind depends on the things we eat or drink, although during a certain stage restrictions in eating and drinking are useful to our inner progress; nor on the other hand must we continue to think that the dependence of the mind or even of the life on food and drink is anything more than a habit, a customary relation which Nature has set up between these principles. As a matter of fact the food we take can be reduced by contrary habit and new relation to a minimum without the mental or vital vigour being in any way reduced; even on the contrary with a judicious development they can be trained to a greater potentiality of vigour by learning to rely

on the secret fountains of mental and vital energy with which they are connected more than upon the minor aid of physical aliments." (CWSA 23: 344)

12. "The desire-mind must also be rejected from the instrument of thought and this is best done by the detachment of the Purusha from thought and opinion itself." (CWSA 23: 354)

13. "The object of purification is to make the whole mental being a clear mirror in which the divine reality can be reflected, a clear vessel and an unobstructing channel into which the divine presence and through which the divine influence can be poured, a subtilised stuff which the divine nature can take possession of, new-shape and use to divine issues. For the mental being at present reflects only the confusions created by the mental and physical view of the world, is a channel only for the disorders of the ignorant lower nature and full of obstructions and impurities which prevent the higher from acting; therefore the whole shape of our being is deformed and imperfect, indocile to the highest influences and turned in its action to ignorant and inferior utilities. It reflects even the world falsely; it is incapable of reflecting the Divine." (CWSA 23: 515)

14. "All pursuit of knowledge, if not vitiated by a too earthward tendency, tends to refine, to subtilise, to purify the being. In proportion as we become more mental, we attain to a subtler action of our whole nature which becomes more apt to reflect and receive higher thoughts, a purer will, a less physical truth, more inward influences. The power of ethical knowledge and the ethical habit of thought and will to purify is obvious. Philosophy not only purifies the reason and predisposes it to the contact of the universal and the infinite, but tends to stabilise the nature and create the tranquillity of the sage; and tranquillity is a sign of increasing self-mastery and purity. The preoccupation with universal beauty even in its aesthetic forms has an intense power for refining and subtilising the nature, and at its highest it is a great force for purification. Even the scientific habit of mind and the disinterested preoccupation with cosmic law and truth not only refine the reasoning and observing faculty, but have, when not counteracted by other tendencies, a steadying, elevating and purifying influence on the mind and moral nature which has not been sufficiently noticed." (CWSA 23: 516)

15. "Well, a mind at peace and free from rancour is indeed like a palace, but not so a vindictive and turbulent mind. Our thought is a dwelling-place that we can, if we choose, make clean, sweet and serene, full of harmonious notes;

but we can also make it into a dark and dreadful lair filled with mournful sounds and discordant cries." (CWM 2: 174)

16. "And yet control over this formative activity of the mind is one of the most important aspects of self-education; one can say that without it no mental mastery is possible. As far as study is concerned, all ideas are acceptable and should be included in the synthesis, whose very function is to become more and more rich and complex; but where action is concerned, it is just the opposite. The ideas that are accepted for translation into action should be strictly controlled and only those that agree with the general trend of the central idea forming the basis of the mental synthesis should be permitted to express themselves in action. This means that every thought entering the mental consciousness should be set before the central idea; if it finds a logical place among the thoughts already grouped, it will be admitted into the synthesis; if not, it will be rejected so that it can have no influence on the action. This work of mental purification should be done very regularly in order to secure a complete control over one's actions." (CWM 12: 28)

C. Four successive stages for the purification of the mind according to the *Dhammapada*

1. "Every Friday I shall read out to you a few verses of the Dhammapada, then we shall meditate on that text. This is to teach you mental control. If I think it necessary I shall give you an explanation.

…

If a man speaks or acts with an evil mind, suffering follows him as the wheel follows the hoof of the bullock that pulls the cart.

That is to say, ordinary human life, such as it is in the present world, is ruled by the mind; therefore the most important thing is to control one's mind; so we shall follow a graded or 'conjugate' discipline, to use the Dhammapada's expression, in order to develop and control our minds.

There are four movements which are usually consecutive, but which in the end may be simultaneous: to observe one's thoughts is the first, to watch over one's thoughts is the second, to control one's thoughts is the third and to master one's thoughts is the fourth. To observe, to watch over, to control, to master. All that to get rid of an evil mind, for we are told that the man who acts or speaks with an evil mind is followed by suffering as closely as the wheel follows the hoof of a bullock that ploughs or draws the cart.

This is our first meditation.

Mind predominates. Everything proceeds from mind. In all things the primordial element is mind. If a man speaks or acts with a purified mind, happiness accompanies him as closely as his inseparable shadow.

This is the counterpart of what we read last time. The Dhammapada contrasts a purified mind with an evil mind. We have already said that there are four successive stages for the purification of the mind. A purified mind is naturally a mind that does not admit any wrong thought, and we have seen that the complete mastery of thought which is required to gain this result is the last achievement in the four stages I have spoken of. The first is: to observe one's mind.

Do not believe that it is such an easy thing, for to observe your thoughts, you must first of all separate yourself from them. In the ordinary state, the ordinary man does not distinguish himself from his thoughts. He does not even know that he thinks. He thinks by habit. And if he is asked all of a sudden, 'What are you thinking of?', he knows nothing about it. That is to say, ninety-five times out of a hundred he will answer, 'I do not know.' There is a complete identification between the movement of thought and the consciousness of the being.

To observe the thought, the first movement then is to step back and look at it, to separate yourself from your thoughts so that the movement of the consciousness and

that of thought may not be confused. Thus when we say that one must observe one's thoughts, do not believe that it is so simple; it is the first step. I suggest that this evening in our meditation we take up this first exercise which consists in standing back from one's thought and looking at it." (CWM 3: 183–184)

2. *"'He has insulted me, he has beaten me, he has humiliated me, he has robbed me.' Those who nourish thoughts such as these never appease their hatred.*

The Dhammapada tells us first of all that bad thoughts bring about suffering and good thoughts bring about happiness. Now it gives examples of what bad thoughts are and tells us how to avoid suffering. Here is the first example, I repeat: 'He has insulted me, he has beaten me, he has humiliated me, he has robbed me'; and it adds: 'Those who nourish thoughts such as these never appease their hatred.'

…

Today we have to learn how to watch over these thoughts. First you look at them and then you watch over them. Learn to look at them as an enlightened judge so that you may distinguish between the good and the bad, between thoughts that are useful and those that are harmful, between constructive thoughts that lead to victory and defeatist thoughts which turn us away from it. It is this

power of discernment that we must acquire now; that will be the subject of our meditation tonight.

As I have told you, the Dhammapada will give us examples, but examples are only examples. We must ourselves learn how to distinguish thoughts that are good from those that are not, and for that you must observe, as I have said, like an enlightened judge—that is to say, as impartially as possible; it is one of the most indispensable conditions." (CWM 3: 185)

3. *"He has insulted me, he has beaten me, he has humiliated me, he has robbed me." Those who do not nourish thoughts such as these foster no hatred.*

This is the counterpart of what we read the other day. But note that this concerns only thoughts that generate resentment. It is because rancor [bitterness], along with jealousy, is one of the most widespread causes of human misery.

But how to avoid having rancour? A large and generous heart is certainly the best means, but that is not within the reach of all. Controlling one's thought may be of more general use.

Thought-control is the third step of our mental discipline. Once the enlightened judge of our consciousness has distinguished between useful and harmful thoughts, the inner guard will come and allow to

pass only approved thoughts, strictly refusing admission to all undesirable elements.

With a commanding gesture the guard will refuse entry to every bad thought and push it back as far as possible.

It is this movement of admission and refusal that we call thought-control and this will be the subject of our meditation tonight." (CWM 3: 186)

4. "*For, in truth, in this world hatred is not appeased by hatred; hatred is appeased by love alone. This is the eternal law.*

This is one of the most celebrated verses of the Dhammapada, one of those most often cited—I would have liked to be able to say, 'one of the most obeyed in the world'; unfortunately that would not be true. For people speak much of this teaching but do not follow it.

Yet, there is one aspect of the problem which is less spoken of but which seems perhaps more urgent still if you want things to change in the world, something to which people give very little thought. I am going to surprise you. It is this: if love must be returned for hatred in order that the world may change, would it not be even more natural that love should be returned for Love?

If one considers the life and action and heart of men as they are, one would have every right to be surprised at

all the hatred, contempt, or at best, the indifference which are returned for this immensity of Love which the divine Grace pours upon the world, for this immensity of Love which acts upon the world at every second to lead it towards the divine delight and which finds so poor a response in the human heart. But people have compassion only for the wicked, the deficient, the misshapen, for the unsuccessful ones and the failures—truly it is an encouragement to wickedness and failure.

If one thought a little more of this aspect of the problem, perhaps one would have less need to insist on the necessity of returning love for hatred, because if the human heart responded in all sincerity to the Love that is being poured into it with the spontaneous gratitude of a love which understands and appreciates, then things would change quickly in the world." (CWM 3: 186–187)

5. "*Just as the strong wind uproots a feeble tree, so Mara overwhelms the man who lives only in pursuit of pleasure, who does not control his senses, who knows not how to moderate his appetite, who is lazy and wastes his energies.*

In Buddhist literature, Mara represents the Spirit of Evil, all that is contrary or opposed to the spiritual life; in certain cases he represents death—not so much physical death as death to truth, to the spiritual being.

Here, it means that so long as one does not control one's senses and desires, and concerns oneself with external material satisfactions as the most important thing, one has not the will necessary to resist the attack of hostile forces and all that pulls us down and leads us away from the spiritual reality.

The Dhammapada does not take its stand so much on the moral point of view; it is not evil as men understand it with their blind justice and their arbitrary sense of good and bad. Evil, from the spiritual point of view, is truly that which leads us away from the goal, which sometimes even tears us away from the deepest purpose of our existence, from the truth of our being and prevents us from realising it.

This is the way in which it should be understood." (CWM 3: 188–189)

6. "*He who puts on the yellow robe while he is yet impure, lacking in self-control and lacking in loyalty, truly he is unworthy to wear the yellow robe of the monk.*

Of course, the yellow robe, in the literal sense, is the robe of the Buddhist monks; it became the robe of all who practiced asceticism. But this is not what the Dhammapada truly means to say, because there is no lack of men who wear the yellow robe but are not purified of their taints. The yellow robe is taken as the symbol of consecration to

the spiritual life, the external sign of renunciation of all that is not an exclusive concentration upon the spiritual life.

What Buddhism means by 'impurities' is chiefly egoism and ignorance; because, from the Buddhist standpoint, the greatest of all taints is ignorance, not ignorance of external things, of the laws of Nature and of all that you learn at school, but the ignorance of the deepest truth of things, of the law of the being, of the Dharma.

It is noteworthy that the two defects insisted upon here are lack of self-control and lack of loyalty. Loyalty means here sincerity, honesty; what the Dhammapada censures most severely is hypocrisy: to pretend that you want to live the spiritual life and not to do it, to pretend that you want to seek the truth and not to do it, to display the external signs of consecration to the divine life—here symbolised by the yellow robe—but within to be concerned only with oneself, one's selfishness and one's own needs.

It is interesting to note the insistence of the Dhammapada on self-control, for according to the Buddhist teaching, excess in all things is bad. The Buddha always insisted on the Middle Path. You must not be too much on one side nor too much on the other, exaggerate one thing or the other. You must have measure, balance in all things, the balance of moderation.

Therefore the qualities that make you worthy of leading the spiritual life are to have an inner balance, a

balance in your action, and to be moderate in everything, to be sincere, honest, loyal.

Balance, moderation, loyalty, honesty: this is the subject of our meditation." (CWM 3: 189–190)

7. "*But he who has discarded all impurity, who is firmly attached to the precepts of morality, who knows how to moderate his appetite and who is loyal, he, truly, is worthy to wear the yellow robe.*

I would not like you to take this text as a moral catechism. It certainly has a much deeper and truer meaning, because in all truly spiritual teachings, morality as it is mentally conceived is out of place.

So too the word 'impurity'. Pure, as it is understood morally, has not at all the meaning it is given in a truly spiritual teaching; and particularly from the Buddhist standpoint, purity is absence of ignorance, as I have already told you last time, and ignorance means ignoring the inner law, the truth of the being. And loyalty means not to take the illusion for the reality, the changing and fluctuating appearances for the inner and real permanence of the being.

We can say then that self-control and self-mastery, measure, absence of desire, the search for the inner truth of the being and the law of its self-manifestation are very

necessary preoccupations for those who want to practise the spiritual life.

To be true to oneself, to one's goal, not to let oneself be moved by disorderly impulses, not to take the changing appearances for the Reality, these are the virtues that one must have in order to progress on the way of spirituality." (CWM 3: 191)

8. "*Doing evil, one harms oneself; avoiding evil, one purifies oneself; purity and impurity depend on ourselves; no one can purify another.*" On the Dhammapada (CWM 3: 240)

9. "*Abstain from evil; cultivate good and purify your mind. This is the teaching of the Awakened Ones.*" On the Dhammapada (CWM 3: 246)

10. "There is nothing mind can do that cannot be better done in the mind's immobility and thought-free stillness.

When mind is still, then Truth gets her chance to be heard in the purity of the silence." (CWSA 12: 255)

D. Purifying the heart

1. "The heart must be purified of all desire ..." (CWSA 13: 73)

2. "*Mother, why is it better to concentrate in the heart?*

He [Sri Aurobindo] says here that it is easier. For some people it is more difficult, it depends on one's nature. But it is better because if you concentrate there, deeply enough, it is there that you enter into contact with the psychic for the first time; while if you concentrate in the head you have to pass later from the head to the heart to be able to identify yourself with the psychic being. And if you concentrate by gathering the energies, it is better to gather them here [in the heart], because it is in this centre, in this region of the being that you find the will to progress, the force of purification, and the most intense and effective aspiration. The aspiration that comes from the heart is much more effective than that from the head." (CWM 6: 389)

3. "As for the way out of the impasse, I know only of the quieting of the mind which makes meditation effective, purification of the heart which brings the divine touch and in time the divine presence, humility before the Divine which liberates from egoism and the pride of the mind and of the vital, the pride that imposes its own reasonings on the ways of the spirit and the pride that refuses or is unable to surrender, sustained persistence in the call within and reliance on the Grace above." (CWSA 35: 619)

4. "Again, when your heart is turned to the Mother and satisfied with her love, when you are full of peace, contentment and happiness, then there is no room for wrong feelings and desires; your heart is pure.

This is what the Mother meant by purity; to be free from … wrong feelings, desires, demands etc. is to be pure." (CWSA 29: 49)

5. "Pure and true thoughts and emotions and impulsions can rise from the human mind, heart and vital, because all is not evil there. The heart may be unpurified, but that does not mean that everything in it is impure." (CWSA 28: 193)

6. "Of course, renunciation of sex is indispensable for the purification you seek,—the heart must be pure and consecrated to the Divine. There must be no turn left that side. As for food, well, that is not so much a purification of the heart as of the vital in the physical, but it is of course very helpful to get control there. The purification of the heart is the central necessity, but a purification of the mind, vital and physical is also called for. But the most important thing for purification of the heart is an absolute sincerity. No pretence with oneself, no concealment from the Divine or oneself or the Guru, a straight look at one's nature and one's movements, a straight will to make them straight. It does not so much matter if it takes time; one must be prepared to make it one's whole life-task to seek the

Divine. Purifying the heart means after all a pretty considerable achievement and it is no use getting despondent, despairful etc. because one finds things in oneself that still need to be changed. If one keeps the true will and true attitude, then the intuitions or intimations from within will begin to grow, become clear, precise, unmistakable and the strength to follow them will grow also. And then before even you are satisfied with yourself, the Divine will be satisfied with you and begin to withdraw the veil by which he protects himself and his seeker against a premature and perilous grasping of the greatest thing to which humanity can aspire." (CWSA 30: 43)

7. "The heart is the centre of the emotional being and the emotions are vital movements. When the heart is purified, the vital emotions change into psychic feelings or else psychicised vital movements." (CWSA 28: 193)

E. Purification of the vital

1. "Vital purity: it begins with the abolition of desire." (CWM 14: 150)

2. "When I speak of the vital mixture or of the obstructions, revolts etc. of the vital, it is the unregenerated outer vital full of desire and ego and the lower passions of which I speak. I could say the same against the mind and the

physical when they obstruct or oppose, but precisely because the vital is so powerful and indispensable, its obstruction, opposition or refusal of cooperation is more strikingly effective and its wrong mixtures are more dangerous to the sadhana. That is why I have always insisted on the dangers of the unregenerated vital and the necessity of mastery and purification there. It is not because I hold, like the Sannyasis, the vital and its life power to be a thing to be condemned and rejected in its very nature." (CWSA 31: 284)

3. "Equally, the vital and nervous energies in us are there for a great utility; they too demand the divine realisation of their possibilities in our ultimate fulfilment. … It is therefore no integral Yoga that kills these vital energies, forces them into a nerveless quiescence or roots them out as the source of noxious activities. Their purification, not their destruction,—their transformation, control and utilisation is the aim in view with which they have been created and developed in us." (CWSA 23: 11–12)

4. "This is the reason why many sadhaks after having big experiences fall into the clutch of a magnified ego, upheavals, ambition, exaggerated sex or other vital passions or distortions. It is always well therefore if a complete purification of the vital can either precede or keep

pace with the positive experience—at least in natures in which the vital is strongly active." (CWSA 28: 181)

5. "Purification of the vital is usually considered to be a condition for successful sadhana. One may have some experiences without it, but at least a complete detachment from the vital movements is necessary for a sustained realisation." (CWSA 31: 107)

6. "It is true that for the external vital an outer discipline is necessary for the purification, otherwise it remains restless and fanciful and at the mercy of its own impulses—so that no basis can be built there for a quiet and abiding higher consciousness to remain firmly." (CWSA 31: 107)

7. "Moral rules and ideals are a harness for the ignorant soul, bridle and bit for the passions, reins that compel it to an assigned road, yoke and poles and traces that bind it to be faithful to the burden it carries. Morality checks and controls but does not purify or change the vital nature." (CWSA 12: 350)

8. "The vital is a good worker, but most often it seeks its own satisfaction. If that is refused, totally or even partially, the vital gets vexed, sulks and goes on strike. Its energy disappears more or less completely and in its place leaves disgust for people and things, discouragement or revolt,

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

9. "It [the psychic life-energy] means the life-energy which comes from within and is in consonance with the psychic being—it is the energy of the true vital being, but in the ordinary ignorant vital it is deformed into desire.

You have to quiet and purify the vital and let the true vital emerge.

Or you have to bring the psychic in front, and the psychic will purify and psychicise the vital and then you will have the true vital energy." (CWSA 31: 112)

10. "It [vital consecration] is to offer all the vital nature and its movements to the Divine so that it may be purified and only the true movements in consonance with the Divine Will may be there and all egoistic desires and impulses disappear." (CWSA 31: 113)

11. "What you have to aspire for and bring down in you is the peace of the Mother's consciousness. Peace, calm, equanimity in the emotional being and the rest of the vital especially—it is that which will purify the emotions and deliver the vital." (CWSA 31: 114)

12. "It is this descent of the sadhana to free the vital being that made you feel the necessity of concentrating in the region of the heart; for in the region of the heart is the psychic centre and below, behind the navel, is the vital centre. If these two can be awakened and occupied by the Yoga-Force, then the psychic or Soul-Power will command the whole vital range and purify the vital nature and tranquillise it and turn it towards the Divine. It will be best if you are able to concentrate at will in the heart region and at the crown of the head, for that gives a more complete power of sadhana." (CWSA 31: 123)

13. "Why should you suppose it [*the effort of sadhana*] is vain? The purification of the vital takes a long time because until all the parts are free, none is quite free and because they use a multitude of movements which have to be changed or enlightened,—and moreover there is a great habit of persistence and resistance in the habitual movements of the nature. One therefore easily thinks that one has made no progress,—but all sincere and sustained effort of purification has its result and after a time the progress made will become evident." (CWSA 31: 136–137)

14. "The lower vital in most human beings is full of grave defects and of movements that respond to hostile forces. A constant psychic opening, a persistent rejection of these influences, a separation of oneself from all hostile suggestions and the inflow of the calm, light, peace, purity of the Mother's power would eventually free the system from the siege." (CWSA 31: 158)

15. "Sometimes the aspiration is felt at the navel, but that is part of the larger vital. The lower vital is below. The lower vital aspires by offering all its small movements in the fire of purification, by calling for the light and power to descend into it and rid it of its little greeds, jealousies, resistances and revolts over small matters, angers, vanities, sexualities etc. to be replaced by the right movements governed by selflessness, purity, obedience to

the urge of the Divine Force in all things." (CWSA 31: 168–169)

16. "It is not possible that there should not be occasional stumbles, failures etc. in the work of self-purification and change; but to feel upset or remorseful over them is harmful rather than helpful; it easily brings depression and depression brings clouding of the mind and weakness." (CWSA 31: 188)

17. "Until the vital has been purified, illumined and wholly offered to the Divine, there is always a vital mixture in these relations—a mixture of the movements of the lower nature." (CWSA 31: 283–284)

18. "It is necessary therefore that the realisation with its peace and force of purity should come down concretely into the vital and physical itself so that when the vital movements try to rise they are met by it and unable to remain because of its automatic pressure." (CWSA 31: 367)

19. "Vital purity is very necessary, but it is not easy to make it immune from attack unless the wideness is there along with a solid *spiritual* purity and peace descending in the wideness. Of course, wideness by *itself* is not sufficient." (CWSA 31: 794)

20. "The vital part of us is, of course, necessary to our completeness, but it is a true instrument only when its feelings and tendencies have been purified by the psychic touch and taken up and governed by the spiritual light and power." (CWSA 28: 194–195)

21. "*Your* vital cannot be destroyed, because it is needed as an instrument for the manifestation of the Divine element in you. There can be no life and no manifestation here on earth without the vital. It has not to be destroyed, but purified and changed into the true Vital." (CWSA 28: 197)

22. "The vital has not to be killed or destroyed, but purified and transformed by the psychic and spiritual control." (CWSA 31: 106)

23. "... a light in the vital may purify and enlarge the vital movements or else silence and immobilise the vital being, ..." (CWSA 29: 398)

24. "It is quite true that when you first came, the Mother was not in favour of your staying and taking up the Yoga here, for you had then a very strong obscurity and impurity in your vital nature and this could easily make the Yoga too difficult for you and create serious trouble. When however you persisted in staying, we gave you your opportunity as

we had done in similar cases before. For it is always possible for the psychic being to prevail, if it is determined to do so, over the difficulties of the vital nature, even though it may mean severe inner struggles for a time. This concession was justified by certain results; you opened in a remarkable way into the inner being by the poetic aspiration and you had experiences which strengthened the psychic call and created a psychic and mental basis for your sadhana. Even you were able to throw out from the vital the sexual obsession which had been one of the chief difficulties there." (CWSA 27: 713–714)

25. "It is by enlightening, strengthening and purifying the vital, and not by weakening it, that one can contribute to the true progress of the being. To deprive oneself of sensations is therefore as harmful as depriving oneself of food. But just as the choice of food must be made wisely and solely for the growth and proper functioning of the body, so too the choice of sensations and their control should be made with a very scientific austerity and solely for the growth and perfection of the vital, of this highly dynamic instrument, which is as essential for progress as all the other parts of the being." (CWM 12: 56)

It is very important that the vital should agree to change: it must learn to accept conversion. The vital is not in itself anything to be decried: in fact, all energy, dynamism and

push comes from it—without it you may be calm and wise and detached, but you will be absolutely immobile and uncreative. The body would be inert, just like a stone, without the force infused into it by the vital. If the vital is left out, you would be able to realise nothing. But like a spirited horse it is liable to be refractory and, therefore, requires good control. You have to keep your reins tight and your whip ready in order to keep the powerful beast in check. Of course, once the vital has consented to be transformed there is no need either of the tight reins or the ready whip: you proceed smoothly towards the goal, leaping lightly over each obstacle in the way. Otherwise, the vital will either stumble over the barriers or fight shy of jumping them. It is no use thinking that all would have been well if there had been no hurdles at all: they are a part of the game and if they are not faced and jumped in this life on earth you will have to surmount a hundred times greater ones on other planes and in other lives. The best thing is to make up your mind once for all and train your vital to run the race here while you are in the body and, if possible, win it. You are sure to win provided your physical mind reforms itself and helps the vital to change, instead of playing the role of a robber who holds down his victim while his accomplice makes a haul of the victim's property.

(CWM 3: 144)

XXII —The Divine Can Change Lower Members If We Yield with Entire Faith, Courage and Patience

1. "Or, even, the steady vision can be there on the summits of our nature, but the perfect response of the lower members comes only by degrees. In all Yoga the first requisites are faith and patience. The ardours of the heart and the violences of the eager will that seek to take the kingdom of heaven by storm can have miserable reactions if they disdain to support their vehemence on these humbler and quieter auxiliaries. And in the long and difficult integral Yoga there must be an integral faith and an unshakable patience." (CWSA 23: 244)

2. "The movement of the Ignorance is egoistic at its core and nothing is more difficult for us than to get rid of egoism while yet we admit personality and adhere to action in the half-light and half-force of our unfinished nature. It is easier to starve the ego by renouncing the impulse to act or to kill it by cutting away from us all movement of personality. It is easier to exalt it into self-forgetfulness immersed in a trance of peace or an ecstasy of divine Love. But our more difficult problem is to liberate the true Person and attain to a divine manhood which shall be the pure vessel of a divine force and the perfect instrument of a divine action. Step after step has to be firmly taken; difficulty after difficulty has to be entirely experienced and

entirely mastered. Only the Divine Wisdom and Power can do this for us and it will do all if we yield to it in an entire faith and follow and assent to its workings with a constant courage and patience." (CWSA 23: 247)

3. "It is difficult to acquire or to practise this faith and steadfastness on the rough and narrow path of Yoga because of the impatience of both heart and mind and the eager but soon faltering will of our rajasic nature. The vital nature of man hungers always for the fruit of its labour and, if the fruit appears to be denied or long delayed, he loses faith in the ideal and in the guidance. For his mind judges always by the appearance of things, since that is the first ingrained habit of the intellectual reason in which he so inordinately trusts. Nothing is easier for us than to accuse God in our hearts when we suffer long or stumble in the darkness or to abjure the ideal that we have set before us. For we say, 'I have trusted to the Highest and I am betrayed into suffering and sin and error.' Or else, 'I have staked my whole life on an idea which the stern facts of experience contradict and discourage. It would have been better to be as other men are who accept their limitations and walk on the firm ground of normal experience.' In such moments—and they are sometimes frequent and long—all the higher experience is forgotten and the heart concentrates itself in its own bitterness. It is

in these dark passages that it is possible to fall for good or to turn back from the divine labour." (CWSA 23: 244)

4. "The Master of our works respects our nature even when he is transforming it; he works always through the nature and not by any arbitrary caprice. This imperfect nature of ours contains the materials of our perfection, but inchoate [undeveloped], distorted, misplaced, thrown together in disorder or a poor imperfect order. All this material has to be patiently perfected, purified, reorganised, new-moulded and transformed, not hacked and hewn and slain or mutilated, not obliterated by simple coercion and denial. This world and we who live in it are his creation and manifestation, and he deals with it and us in a way our narrow and ignorant mind cannot understand unless it falls silent and opens to a divine knowledge. In our errors is the substance of a truth which labours to reveal its meaning to our groping intelligence. The human intellect cuts out the error and the truth with it and replaces it by another half-truth half-error; but the Divine Wisdom suffers our mistakes to continue until we are able to arrive at the truth hidden and protected under every false cover. Our sins are the misdirected steps of a seeking Power that aims, not at sin, but at perfection, at something that we might call a divine virtue. Often they are the veils of a quality that has to be transformed and delivered out of this ugly disguise: otherwise, in the perfect providence of things, they would

not have been suffered to exist or to continue. The Master of our works is neither a blunderer nor an indifferent witness nor a dallier with the luxury of unneeded evils. He is wiser than our reason and wiser than our virtue." (CWSA 23: 245–246)

5. "Our nature is not only mistaken in will and ignorant in knowledge but weak in power; but the Divine Force is there and will lead us if we trust in it and it will use our deficiencies and our powers for the divine purpose. If we fail in our immediate aim, it is because he has intended the failure; often our failure or ill-result is the right road to a truer issue than an immediate and complete success would have put in our reach. If we suffer, it is because something in us has to be prepared for a rarer possibility of delight. If we stumble, it is to learn in the end the secret of a more perfect walking. Let us not be in too furious a haste to acquire even peace, purity and perfection. Peace must be ours, but not the peace of an empty or devastated nature or of slain or mutilated capacities incapable of unrest because we have made them incapable of intensity and fire and force. Purity must be our aim, but not the purity of a void or of a bleak and rigid coldness. Perfection is demanded of us, but not the perfection that can exist only by confining its scope within narrow limits or putting an arbitrary full stop to the ever self-extending scroll of the Infinite. Our object is to change into the divine nature, but

the divine nature is not a mental or moral but a spiritual condition, difficult to achieve, difficult even to conceive by our intelligence. The Master of our work and our Yoga knows the thing to be done, and we must allow him to do it in us by his own means and in his own manner." (CWSA 23: 246–247)

6. "The first step on this long path is to consecrate all our works as a sacrifice to the Divine in us and in the world; this is an attitude of the mind and heart, not too difficult to initiate, but very difficult to make absolutely sincere and all-pervasive. The second step is to renounce attachment to the fruit of our works; for the only true, inevitable and utterly desirable fruit of sacrifice—the one thing needful—is the Divine Presence and the Divine Consciousness and Power in us, and if that is gained, all else will be added. This is a transformation of the egoistic will in our vital being, our desire-soul and desire-nature, and it is far more difficult than the other. The third step is to get rid of the central egoism and even the ego-sense of the worker. That is the most difficult transformation of all and it cannot be perfectly done if the first two steps have not been taken; but these first steps too cannot be completed unless the third comes in to crown the movement and, by the extinction of egoism, eradicates the very origin of desire. Only when the small ego-sense is rooted out from the nature can the seeker know his true person that stands

above as a portion and power of the Divine and renounce all motive-force other than the will of the Divine Shakti." (CWSA 23: 247–248)

7. "But the passage is long and the labour arduous before we can look on him with eyes that see true, and still longer and more arduous must be our endeavour if we would rebuild ourselves in his true image. The Master of the work does not reveal himself at once to the seeker. Always it is his Power that acts behind the veil, but it is manifest only when we renounce the egoism of the worker, and its direct movement increases in proportion as that renunciation becomes more and more complete. Only when our surrender to his Divine Shakti is absolute, shall we have the right to live in his absolute presence. And only then can we see our work throw itself naturally, completely and simply into the mould of the Divine Will." (CWSA 23: 243)

XXIII—First Purification, and Then Experience, Is Safer

A. For purification, certain things have to be established

1. "I don't think there is any cause for dissatisfaction with the progress made by you. Experiences come to many before the nature is ready to make full profit from them; to others a more or less prolonged period of purification and preparation of the stuff of the nature or the instruments comes first while experiences are held up till this process is largely or wholly over. The latter method which seems to be adopted in your case is the safer and sounder of the two. … The things that have to be established are—*brahmacaryaṁ śamaḥ satyaṁ praśāntir ātmasaṁyamaḥ: brahmacaryam*, a complete sex-purity; *śamaḥ*, quiet and harmony in the being, its forces maintained but controlled, harmonised, disciplined; *satyam*, truth and sincerity in the whole nature; *praśāntiḥ*, a general state of peace and calm; *ātmasaṁyamaḥ*, the power and habit to control whatever needs control in the movements of the nature. When these are fairly established one has laid a foundation on which one can develop the Yogic consciousness and with the Yogic consciousness there comes an easy opening to realisation and experience." (CWSA 30: 32)

B. Do not be over-eager for experiences, but first aspire for purity

1. "Do not be over-eager for experience,—for experiences you can always get, having once broken the barrier between the physical mind and the subtle planes. What you have to aspire for most is the improved quality of the recipient consciousness in you—discrimination in the mind, the unattached impersonal Witness look on all that goes on in you and around you, purity in the vital, calm equanimity, enduring patience, absence of pride and the sense of greatness—and more especially, the development of the psychic being in you—surrender, self-giving, psychic humility, devotion. It is a consciousness made up of these things, cast in this mould that can bear without breaking, stumbling or deviation into error the rush of lights, powers and experiences from the supraphysical planes. An entire perfection in these respects is hardly possible until the whole nature from the highest mind to the subconscient physical is made one in the light that is greater than Mind; but a sufficient foundation and a consciousness always self-observant, vigilant and growing in these things is indispensable—for perfect purification is the basis of the perfect siddhi." (CWSA 30: 33)

2. "You must not try to get experiences; you are not yet ready for them; instead of the right experience something

abnormal comes. You must get your vital purified and calm so that these movements may not come. Nothing abnormal like not sleeping, not eating—all that is the vital trying to do extraordinary things so as to imagine it is going fast and doing high sadhana. A pure, simple, quiet, well-balanced vital is necessary for this Yoga." (CWSA 30: 34)

3. "It is quite true that a certain amount of purification is indispensable for going on, that the more complete the purification the better because then when the realisations begin they can continue without big difficulties or relapses and without any possibility of fall or failure. It is also true that with many purification is the first need,—certain things have to be got out of the way before one can begin any consecutive inner experience. But the main need is a certain preparation of the consciousness so that it may be able to respond more and more freely to the higher Force. … Psychic preparation, clearing out of the grosser forms of mental and vital ego, opening mind and heart to the Guru and many other things help greatly—it is not perfection or a complete freedom from the dualities or ego that is the indispensable preliminary, but preparedness, a fineness of the inner being which makes spiritual responses and receiving possible." (CWSA 30: 40–41)

C. There is a risk in having experiences before purification

1. "What Krishnaprem writes (I have not read it yet) is perfectly true that purification of the heart is necessary before there can be the spiritual attainment. All ways of spiritual seeking are agreed on that. Purification and consecration are two great necessities of sadhana. It is not a fact that one must be pure in heart before one can have *any* Yogic experience at all, but those who have experiences before purification is done run a great risk. It is much better to have the heart pure first, for then the way becomes safe. Nor can the Divine dwell in one's consciousness, if that consciousness is obscure with impurity. It is for the same reason that I advocate the psychic change of the nature first—for that means the purification of the heart, the turning of it wholly to the Divine, the subjection of the mind, of the vital passions, desires, demands, of the physical instincts to the control of the inner being, the soul. What Krishnaprem calls intuitions I would describe as psychic intimations or, as some experience it, the voice of the soul showing the outer members what is the true thing to be done. Always when the soul is in front, one gets the right guidance from within what is to be done, what avoided, what is the wrong thing or the true thing in thought, feeling, action. But this inner

intimation emerges in proportion as the consciousness grows more and more pure." (CWSA 30: 41–42)

2. "In fact one cannot or ought not to plunge into the experiences of this sadhana without a fairly long period of preparation and purification (unless one has already a great spiritual strength and elevation). Sri Aurobindo himself does not care to accept many into his path and rejects many more than he accepts." (CWSA 35: 398)

3. "Without purification it is not possible to live always in the Brahman consciousness." (CWSA 35: 304)

4. "The straining to recover the experience was not the right thing to do then; what should have been done was the aspiration for the purification and preparation of the nature, the permanent psychic opening and the increase of the higher spiritual opening above till there could be a total release of the being. The vehemence of the action of the forces was due to the resistance and the breaking of the knots in the head and different parts of the nature was their working for the release. The 'electricity' passing through the spinal column was the passage of the Force making its way down through the centres. Obviously it is the dark resisting force of the vital, the desire nature, that rises up and clouds all up to the heart. On the other hand the flow from above and the silence it creates is a sign of

the opening above being still there; for the silence, the quietude of the nature is a touch from above and very necessary for purification and release. What is lacking is the full opening of the psychic being behind the heart—for that could liberate the heart from the dark force and make possible a cleaning of the rest by a quiet and steady rather than a vehement working attended by chaotic action and struggle." (CWSA 30: 384)

5. "The next thing I have said is that it is better to get the nature ready first (the purified heart and all that) before the 'experiences' begin rather than the other way round and I base that on the many cases there have been of the danger of experiences before the heart and vital are ready for the true experience." (CWSA 29: 469)

6. "According to the affirmation of people acquainted with the subject, the preliminary purification before getting any Yogic experiences worth the name may extend to 12 years. After that one may legitimately expect something. You are far from the limit yet—so no reason to despair." (CWSA 30: 33)

D. Yoga undertaken without sufficient purification can expose one to adverse forces

1. "But the case of an influence [of adverse force]—being under an influence and expressing it—this, unfortunately,

is very frequent, especially with people who undertake yoga without being sufficiently purified beforehand, or otherwise with egoistic intentions; to people who begin to do yoga for reasons of ambition or vanity it happens very often that they put themselves under the influence of certain adverse forces.

And there are … psychic beings who choose a certain environment to incarnate in because they think that there they will have the experiences they want, and owing to some circumstances in this environment there is a hostile influence at work; so the body they put on is to a certain extent under this hostile influence and they have to fight against that terribly all their life. They can at a particular moment, as I said—if they know how to rely on greater forces than their own—they can conquer and gain a great victory. It is a great victory to get rid of the influence of an adverse force. It is truly a victory which goes beyond the individual's own person and has a repercussion on the whole terrestrial state. Each victory gained like this by an individual over a hostile force influencing him, is a long step forward to the day when the earth will be completely free of the presence of hostile forces. It represents a great progress for the earth." (CWM 6: 436)

2. "No misfortune can come, the adverse forces cannot touch or be victorious unless there is some defect in oneself, some impurity, weakness or at the very least

ignorance. One should then seek out this weakness in oneself and correct it." (CWSA 31: 780)

3. "A being who is in a whirlwind of darkness is obviously not ready to receive the Spirit. But when by the use of reason one has managed to organise his being logically and reasonably, in a balanced and wise way—reason is essentially an instrument of wisdom—well, this is an excellent preparation for going beyond, on condition that one knows that it is not a culmination, that it is only a preparation. It is like a base, you see; people who have spiritual experiences, who have a contact with the higher worlds and are not ready in the lower domains, have a lot of trouble, because they have to fight constantly against a heap of elements which are neither organised nor purified nor classified; and each one pulls its own way, there are impulses and preferences and desires, and so this light which has come from above has to organise all this; whereas if the reason had worked to begin with and made the place at least a habitable one, when the Spirit came it would have been more easily installed." (CWM 7: 171)

4. "As for Shakti, the descent of Shakti before the vital is pure and surrendered, has its dangers. It is better for him to pray for purification, knowledge, intensity of the heart's aspiration and as much working of the Power as he can bear and assimilate." (CWSA 35: 545)

5. "When we are in the presence of hostile forces, only the purity of an absolute truth can conquer them." (CWM 16: 50)

6. "Let her purify the outer being, and abolish the ego, by a complete and perfect consecration to the Supreme Divine, and the obstacle will be removed.

The adverse forces are allowed to act only in order to compel us to make ourselves pure and receptive enough for the descent and the union." (CWM 17: 400–401)

XXIV—Many Can Have Realisation through Meditation First, and Then Purification Starts

A. There is no absolute generalisation regarding realisation and purification

1. "I do not know what Krishnaprem said or in which article, I do not have it with me. But if the statement is that nobody can have a successful meditation or realise anything till he is pure and perfect, I fail to follow it; it contradicts my own experience. I have always had realisation by meditation first and the purification started afterwards as a result. I have seen many get important, even fundamental realisations by meditation who could not be said to have a great inner development. Are all Yogis who have meditated with effect and had great realisations in their inner consciousness perfect in their nature? It does not look like it to me. I am unable to believe in absolute generalisations in this field, because the development of spiritual consciousness is an exceedingly vast and complex affair in which all sorts of things can happen and one might almost say that for each man it is different according to his nature and that the one thing that is essential is the inner call and aspiration and the perseverance to follow always after it no matter how long it takes or what are the difficulties or impediments—because nothing else will satisfy the soul within us." (CWSA 30: 40–41)

B. Purification and positive experience can go on side by side

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

C. Purification of experience is achieved by removing motives of ambition, vanity, desire and power

1. "*How can experience be purified?*

Sri Aurobindo has spoken at the beginning of experiences which become impure through ambition or vanity or... he explains it. And so, purification of experience means to make the experience sincere and motiveless. To take away all one's motives of ambition and vanity, of desire, power, etc. This is called purifying the experience, making it sincere, spontaneous and not mixing it with desires and ambitions. There are spiritual ambitions, he speaks of them, and these are even the most dangerous." (CWM 7: 13–14)

D. During the period of experience, never try to understand it, for that immediately deforms it and takes away its purity

1. "Similarly, when you have an experience, you must never, during the period of the experience, try to understand what it is, for you immediately cause it to vanish, or you deform it and take away its purity; in the same way, if you want a spiritual teaching to enter into you, you must be absolutely *immobile* in your head, immobile like a mirror which not only reflects but absorbs the ray of light, lets it enter and go deep within, so that from the depths of your consciousness it may spring up again, some day or other, in the form of knowledge." (CWM 8: 236)

XXV—Dangers of Breaking the Wall between the Inner Being and the Outer before the Purification of the Outer Nature

1. "Even before the tranquillising purification of the outer nature has been effected or before it is sufficient, one can still break down the wall screening our inner being from our outer awareness by a strong force of call and aspiration, a vehement will or violent effort or an effective discipline or process; but this may be a premature movement and is not without its serious dangers. In entering within one may find oneself amidst a chaos of unfamiliar and supernormal experiences to which one has not the key or a press of subliminal or cosmic forces, subconscient, mental, vital, subtle-physical, which may unduly sway or chaotically drive the being, encircle it in a cave of darkness, or keep it wandering in a wilderness of glamour, allurement, deception, or push it into an obscure battlefield full of secret and treacherous and misleading or open and violent oppositions; beings and voices and influences may appear to the inner sense and vision and hearing claiming to be the Divine Being or His messengers or Powers and Godheads of the Light or guides of the path to realisation, while in truth they are of a very different character. If there is too much egoism in the nature of the seeker or a strong passion or an excessive ambition, vanity or other dominating weakness, or an obscurity of the mind

or a vacillating will or a weakness of the life-force or an unsteadiness in it or want of balance, he is likely to be seized on through these deficiencies and to be frustrated or to deviate, misled from the true way of the inner life and seeking into false paths, or to be left wandering about in an intermediate chaos of experiences and fail to find his way out into the true realisation. These perils were well-known to a past spiritual experience and have been met by imposing the necessity of initiation, of discipline, of methods of purification and testing by ordeal, of an entire submission to the directions of the path-finder or path-leader, one who has realised the Truth and himself possesses and is able to communicate the light, the experience, a guide who is strong to take by the hand and carry over difficult passages as well as to instruct and point out the way. But even so the dangers will be there and can only be surmounted if there is or there grows up a complete sincerity, a will for purity, a readiness for obedience to the Truth, for surrender to the Highest, a readiness to lose or to subject to a divine yoke the limiting and self-affirming ego. These things are the sign that the true will for realisation, for conversion of the consciousness, for transformation is there, the necessary stage of the evolution has been reached: in that condition the defects of nature which belong to the human being cannot be a permanent obstacle to the change from the mental to the spiritual status; the process may never be

entirely easy, but the way will have been made open and practicable.” (CWSA 22: 938–939)

XXVI—Those with Great Power for Yoga Can Also Have Great Imperfections and Can Overcome Them by Persistent Effort

A. Strong and powerful natures, with great inner strength, have a great capacity for Yoga
B. Strong natures also have strong difficulties
C. It is impossible in this world to be without difficulties

1. "*Sweet Mother, why is it said that 'those who have the greatest power for Yoga... have too, very often... the greatest imperfections'?*

Why is it like that? (*Silence*) Because one must have a very strong, very powerful nature, with great inner strength in order to have a great capacity for yoga; and very strong natures have also very strong difficulties.

People who are neutral, dull, unimportant, usually go their own little way without being disturbed very much. But they cannot do anything very much, their road is very small and very short; they reach the end very quickly. They can't do much. But people who have a strong nature have also strong difficulties. For it is absolutely impossible in this world to be without difficulties. So long as the world remains what it is and one participates in the world, one necessarily participates in its difficulties.

XXVI—Those with Great Power for Yoga Can Also Have Great Imperfections and Can Overcome Them by Persistent Effort

It is only by a very persistent effort that one can succeed in overcoming his difficulties; and yet it seems impossible to cut oneself off completely from one's solidarity with the rest of the world. Therefore a perfect purity, a perfect perfection seem impossible so long as the world has not reached at least a certain degree of perfection. Even the ascetic, the solitary, who goes and sits in a cave or under a tree or in the jungle, cannot completely free himself from solidarity with the rest of the world. The air he breathes is full of all the vibrations of the world, the food he eats, whatever it may be, even if it is reduced to the minimum, contains the vibrations of the world; and so, it is enough for him to exist to be in solidarity with the difficulties of the world.

That is why, in fact, the way is so long. Even without having any other consideration than that of what one is absorbing constantly into oneself when breathing or eating, all these things one must constantly transform as one goes on absorbing them. It is a continuous alchemy in which one absorbs a particular kind of vibration containing all the possible disorders and must transmute this into something which is ready to receive the light from above. And this work is perpetual, and perpetually renewed. So it is impossible to live in this world, in the world as it is, and become perfect without the world itself making a great progress." (CWM 6: 446–447)

2. "And then again, even when this has been done, there is still the problem of food; as long as our body is compelled to take in foreign matter in order to subsist, it will absorb at the same time a considerable amount of inert and unconscious forces or those having a rather undesirable consciousness, and this alchemy must take place inside the body. We were speaking of the kinds of consciousness absorbed with food, but there is also the inconscience that's absorbed with food—quite a deal of it. And that is why in many yogas there was the advice to offer to the Divine what one was going to eat before eating it (*Mother makes a gesture of offering, hands joined, palms open*). It consists in calling the Divine down into the food before eating it. One offers it to Him—that is, one puts it in contact with the Divine, so that it may be under the divine influence when one eats it. It is very useful, it is very good. If one knows how to do it, it is very useful, it considerably reduces the work of inner transformation which has to be done." (CWM 6: 213–214)

3. "Remember that the Mother is always with you.

Address Her as follows and She will pull you out of all difficulties:

'O Mother, Thou art the light of my intelligence, the purity of my soul, the quiet strength of my vital, the endurance of my body. I rely on Thee alone and want to

be entirely Thine. Make me surmount all obstacles on the way'." (CWM 15: 215)

D. When the higher force touches the impure vital parts, impurities such as anger, sex, fear, and doubt arise and must be rejected

1. "The attitude which he describes, if he keeps it correctly, is the right one. It brought him at first the beginning of a true experience, the Light (white and golden) and the Force pouring down from the Sahasradala and filling the system; but when it touched the vital parts it must have awakened the prana energies in the vital centres (navel and below) and as these were not pure, all the impurities arose (anger, sex, fear, doubt etc.) and the mind became clouded by the uprush of impure vital forces. He says that all this is now subsiding, the mind is becoming calm and in the vital the impulses come but do not remain. Not only the mind but the vital must become calm; these impulses must lose their force of recurrence by rejection and purification. Entire purity and peace must be established in the whole *ādhāra*; it is only then that he will have a safe and sure basis for further progress." (CWSA 30: 492)
2. "All these thoughts and influences come really from outside, from universal Nature—they create formations in us or get habitual responses from the individual being. When they are rejected, they go back into the external

universal Nature and if one becomes conscious, one can feel them coming from outside and trying to get a lodging inside again or reawaken the habitual response. One has to reject them persistently till no possibility of response remains any longer. This is hastened much if a certain inner calm, purity and silence can be established from which these things fall away without being able to touch it." (CWSA 31: 42–43)

E. Immortality is not a plaything to be given lightly to a child, nor is the divine life a prize to be won without effort

F. Those who can stand the ordeal of fire can remain absolutely pure

1. "Ancient and powerful, cruel, unvanquished and close and innumerable are the dark and dreadful Powers that profit by the reign of Night and Ignorance and would have no change and are hostile. Aloof, slow to arrive, far-off and few and brief in their visits are the Bright Ones who are willing or permitted to succour. Each step forward is a battle." (CWSA 12: 155–156)

2. "*Sri Aurobindo writes here: '...Few and brief in their visits are the Bright Ones who are willing or permitted to succour. [assistance and support in times of hardship]' Why?*

One must go and ask them! But there is a conclusion, the last sentences give a very clear explanation. It is said: 'Nay, then, is immortality a plaything to be given lightly to a child, or the divine life a prize without effort or the crown for a weakling?' This comes back to the question why the adverse forces have the right to interfere, to harass you. But this is precisely the test necessary for your sincerity. If the way were very easy, everybody would start on the way, and if one could reach the goal without any obstacle and without any effort, everybody would reach the goal, and when one has come to the end, the situation would be the same as when one started, there would be no change. That is, the new world would be exactly what the old has been. It is truly not worth the trouble! Evidently a process of elimination is necessary so that only what is capable of manifesting the new life remains. This is the reason and there is no other, this is the best of reasons. And, you see, it is a tempering, it is the ordeal of fire, only that which can stand it remains absolutely pure; when everything has burnt down, there remains only the little ingot of pure gold. And it is like that. What puts things out very much in all this is the religious idea of fault, sin, redemption. But there is no arbitrary decision! On the contrary, for each one it is the best and most favourable conditions which are given. We were saying the other day that it is only his friends whom God treats with severity; you thought it was a joke, but it is true. It is only to those who are full of hope, who

will pass through this purifying flame, that the conditions for attaining the maximum result are given. And the human mind is made in such a way that you may test this; when something extremely unpleasant happens to you, you may tell yourself, 'Well, this proves I am worth the trouble of being given this difficulty, this proves there is something in me which can resist the difficulty', and you will notice that instead of tormenting yourself, you rejoice—you will be so happy and so strong that even the most unpleasant things will seem to you quite charming! This is a very easy experiment to make. Whatever the circumstance, if your mind is accustomed to look at it as something favourable, it will no longer be unpleasant for you. This is quite well known; as long as the mind refuses to accept a thing, struggles against it, tries to obstruct it, there are torments, difficulties, storms, inner struggles and all suffering. But the minute the mind says, 'Good, this is what has to come, it is thus that it must happen', whatever happens, you are content. There are people who have acquired such control of their mind over their body that they feel nothing; I told you this the other day about certain mystics: if they think the suffering inflicted upon them is going to help them cross the stages in a moment and give them a sort of stepping-stone to attain the Realisation, the goal they have put before them, union with the Divine, they no longer feel the suffering at all. Their body is as it were galvanised by the mental conception. This has happened very often, it is

a very common experience among those who truly have enthusiasm. And after all, if one must for some reason or other leave one's body and take a new one, is it not better to make of one's death something magnificent, joyful, enthusiastic, than to make it a disgusting defeat? Those who cling on, who try by every possible means to delay the end even by a minute or two, who give you an example of frightful anguish, show that they are not conscious of their soul.... After all, it is perhaps a means, isn't it? One can change this accident into a means; if one is conscious one can make a beautiful thing of it, a very beautiful thing, as of everything. And note, those who do not fear it, who are not anxious, who can die without any sordidness are those who never think about it, who are not haunted all the time by this 'horror' facing them which they must escape and which they try to push as far away from them as they can. These, when the occasion comes, can lift their head, smile and say, 'Here I am'.

It is they who have the will to make the best possible use of their life, it is they who say, 'I shall remain here as long as it is necessary, to the last second, and I shall not lose one moment to realise my goal'; these, when the necessity comes, put up the best show. Why?—It is very simple, because they live in their ideal, the truth of their ideal; because that is the real thing for them, the very reason of their being, and in all things they can see this

ideal, this reason of existence, and never do they come down into the sordidness of material life.

So, the conclusion:

One must never wish for death.

One must never will to die.

One must never be afraid to die.

And in all circumstances one must will to exceed oneself." (CWM 4: 352–355)

G. For a true relaxation, one must rise one degree higher

1. "And I am speaking of an élite, those who make special studies, discoveries, who run big institutions: outside, they are uncommon people, men of great abilities; back home they become commonplace and often unbearable—they have a nice time, they take rest, relax themselves. And if they begin to amuse themselves, that's the end of it all! I knew people of great intelligence, admirable artists who, as soon as they began to 'relax', became utterly foolish! They did the most vulgar things, behaved like ill-bred children—they were relaxing. Everything comes from this 'need' of relaxation; and what does that mean for most men? It means, always, coming down to a lower level. They do not know that for a true relaxation one must rise one degree higher, one must rise above oneself. If one

goes down, it adds to one's fatigue and brings a kind of stupor." (CWM 4: 156)

2. "Besides, each time one comes down [to lower level], one increases the load of the subconscient—this huge subconscient load which one must clean and clean if one wants to mount, and which is like fetters on the feet. But it is difficult to teach that, for one must know it oneself before one can teach it to others." (CWM 4: 156)

XXVII—Remedy for Those Who Know They Are Doing Foolish Things but Are Unable to Refrain

A. **First decide not to do it and apply all one's strength to refrain**
B. **Keep the consciousness above foolish movements**

1. "People who know that they are doing foolish things, who are conscious, but who are not able to refrain from them, because their mind does not have enough strength to check them?...

But the mind never has sufficient strength to check them! For the mind is an instrument made to see all things from all sides. Then how can you expect to have a will strong enough to resist an impulse when the mind looks at it first from this side and then from that side? … And so, where is your will?...

As I said there, it always finds a way to explain everything, justify everything and give admirable reasons for all things.

It is only the psychic being that has the strength to intervene. If your mind is in contact with your psychic being, if it receives the influence of the psychic being, then it is strong enough to organise the resistance. It knows what the true thing is and what the false; and knowing what the true thing is, if it has the goodwill, it will organise

the resistance, give battle and gain the victory. But that is the only condition: it must be in contact with the psychic being.

For even the most beautiful theories, even if one knows mentally many things and holds admirable principles, that is not sufficiently strong to create a will capable of resisting an impulse. At one time you are quite determined, you have decided that it would be thus—for example, that you would not do such a thing: it is settled, you will not do it—but how is it that suddenly (you do not know how or why nor what has happened), you have not decided anything at all! And then you immediately find in yourself an excellent reason for doing the thing…. Among others, there is a certain kind of excuse which is always given: 'Well, if I do it this time, at least I shall be convinced that it is very bad and I shall do it no longer and this will be the last time.' It is the prettiest excuse one always gives to oneself: 'This is the last time I am doing it. This time, I am doing it to understand perfectly that it is bad and that it must not be done and I shall not do it any more. This is the last time.' Every time, it is the last time! and you begin again.

Of course there are some who have less clear ideas and who say to themselves: 'After all, why don't I want to do it? These are theories, they are principles that might not be true. If I have this impulse, what is it that tells me that this impulse is not better than a theory?...' It is not for

them the last time. It is something they accept as quite natural.

Between these two extremes there are all the possibilities. But the most dangerous of all is to say: 'Well, I am doing it once more this time, that will purify me of this. Afterwards I shall no longer do it.' Now the purification is never enough!

It happens only when you have decided: 'Well, this time, I am going to try not to do it, and I shall not do it, I shall apply all my strength and I shall not do it.' Even if you have just a little success, it is much. Not a big success, but just a small success, a very partial success: you do not carry out what you yearn to do; but the yearning, the desire, the passion is still there and that produces whirls within, but outside you resist, 'I shall not do it, I shall not move; even if I have to bind myself hand and foot, I shall not do it.' It is a partial success—but it is a great victory because, due to this, next time you will be able to do a little more. That is to say, instead of holding all the violent passions within yourself, you can begin calming them a little; and you will calm them slowly at first, with difficulty. They will remain long, they will come back, they will trouble you, vex you, produce in you a great disgust, all that, but if you resist well and say: 'No, I shall carry out nothing; whatever the cost, I shall not carry out anything; I will stay like a rock', then little by little, little by little, that thins out, thins out and you begin to learn the second attitude: 'Now

I want my consciousness to be above those things. There will still be many battles but if my consciousness stands above that, little by little there will come a time when this will return no longer.' And then there is a time when you feel that you are absolutely free: you do not even perceive it, and then that is all. It may take a long time, it may come soon: that depends on the strength of character, on the sincerity of the aspiration. But even for people who have just a little sincerity, if they subject themselves to this process, they succeed. It takes time. They succeed in the first item: in not expressing. All forces upon earth tend towards self-expression. These forces come with the object of manifesting themselves and if you place a barrier and refuse to express them, they may try to beat against the barrier for a time, but in the end, they will tire themselves out and not being manifested, they will withdraw and leave you quiet." (CWM 5: 210–212)

C. The effective order is first not to do it, then not to desire it, and finally to close the door completely

1. "So you must never say: 'I shall first purify my thought, purify my body, purify my vital and then later I shall purify my action.' That is the normal order, but it never succeeds. The effective order is to begin from the outside: 'The very first thing is that I do not do it, and afterwards, I desire it

no longer and next I close my doors completely to all impulses: they no longer exist for me, I am now outside all that.' This is the true order, the order that is effective. First, not to do it. And then you will no longer have desire for anything and after that it will go out of your consciousness completely." (CWM 5: 212–213)

2. "It will be better to do the work as a sadhana for getting rid of the defects rather than accept the defects as a reason for not doing the work. Instead of accepting these reactions as if they were an unchangeable law of your nature, you should make up your mind that they must come no longer—calling down the aid of the Mother's force to purify the vital and eliminate them altogether. If you believe that the trouble in the body must come, naturally it will come; rather fix in your mind the idea and will that it must not come and will not come. If it tries to come reject it and throw it away from you." (CWSA 29: 241)

D. The descent of the higher consciousness from above can change everything

1. "Human nature is always full of impurities and imperfections and of itself cannot reach the Divine. It is by the descent of the higher consciousness from above that all that can change; but you must not expect the change to take place in a few days." (CWSA 31: 655)

2. "The moral of the condition you describe is not that Yoga should not be done but that you have to go on steadily healing the rift between the two parts of the being. The division is very usual, almost universal in human nature, and the following of the lower impulse in spite of the contrary will in the higher parts happens to almost everybody. It is the phenomenon noted by Arjuna in his question to Krishna, 'Why does one do evil, even though one wishes not to do it, as if compelled to it by force?', and expressed sententiously by Ovid, "*video meliora proboque, Deteriora sequor*" ["I see the better and approve of it, I follow the worse."] By constant effort and aspiration one can arrive at a turning point when the psychic asserts itself and what seems a very slight psychological change or reversal alters the whole balance of the nature." (CWSA 28: 121)

[Ovid lends a charming Latin title for the natural-born leader with a gentle but firm soul.]

E. The Mother can penetrate within and, with the white flame of purification, chase out the adverse entity

1. "If you had understood and reacted in the right way, you would have passed the test and got rid not only of this special difficulty but probably of this hostile's influence altogether. But you failed and got possessed. And only one

thing was left to me to do, it was to flood you with the pure light, the white flame of purification to chase from inside you the intruder. It is what you took probably for a cut in our relations, a wall of separation between us; there was nothing of the kind; I was inside you, penetrating you as usual, but in the form of this supreme purity which is so foreign to all that is anti-divine or even to all ordinary human movement.

This adverse entity is not only vital, it is also mental and supports its desires by some apparently reasonable principles which become aggressively stupid by their rigidity. When this seizes you, you seem to lose all common sense and the most elementary understanding.

No wall at all—only the pure light, the white flame of purification penetrating right through, from outside inside, from inside outside.

Now I can tell you what has happened with a chance of being understood." (CWM 15: 24)

F. The time has come for Asuric influences to be rejected and for an exclusive life in the Divine Truth

1. "This is no question of general theory; it belongs to the actuality of things. The Asura is the force of falsehood, antidivine, which reigns as sovereign over the physical world; his influence is felt everywhere, it is in everything in

Matter. But the time has now come when the separation, the purification, can be made, the falsehood, the Asuric influence, rejected and there can be an exclusive living in the Divine Truth." (CWM 15: 176)

XXVIII—Purity from Sex Is a First Requisite for Success on the Path of Sadhana

1. "About sex and Yoga—my teaching has been clearly written in the Bases of Yoga and everyone knows how strongly the Mother has discountenanced these things and considers purity from them a first requisite for success in the path of sadhana." (CWSA 35: 721)

A. The sex-sensation is the perversion and false representation in nature and is the chief obstacle to frequent experience

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

B. Even a sexual thought or a mental or vital desire is sufficient to allow adverse forces to enter

1. "*Tonight again there is a severe attack of the hostile forces. My sleep has completely vanished. I pray to you with utmost sincerity to liberate me from the clutches of these furies. They attack my abdomen, thighs and knees.*

Pray give me the promised advice, so that I may be able to get rid of them completely for ever.

These adverse forces are connected with sexual desire. They live on the energy wasted when the act takes place. And even a thought, a mental or vital desire is sufficient to let them come in and settle in the atmosphere. Thus it is in the mind itself that the purification must take place." (CWM 15: 21–22)

2. "The exterior consciousness can be invaded by what rises up from the subconscient or comes in from outside and owing to a renewed vibration of the past habit can respond—but that does not mean that the will of the vital or of the physical mind is for these things. If there was anything in them normally on the side of sex or violence, then you could say the impurities were there. But if it were so, there would be more than these attacks, there would be a daily struggle with anger and desire. If one had to wait for an absolute purity free from all possibility of these attacks before beginning to realise the Divine, nobody would ever be able to realise. It is as the realisation progresses, that the fundamental transformation takes place." (CWSA 31: 600–601)

3. "These obstacles are usual in the first stages of the sadhana. They are due to the nature being not yet

sufficiently receptive. You should find out where the obstacle is, in the mind or the vital, and try to widen the consciousness there, call in more purity and peace and in that purity and peace offer that part of your being sincerely and wholly to the Divine Power." (CWSA 31: 638)

C. Face the problem of sex in a spirit of detachment

1. "There is another danger; it is in connection with the sex impulses. Yoga in its process of purification will lay bare and throw up all hidden impulses and desires in you. And you must learn not to hide things nor leave them aside, you have to face them and conquer and remould them. The first effect of Yoga, however, is to take away the mental control, and the hungers that lie dormant are suddenly set free, they rush up and invade the being. So long as this mental control has not been replaced by the Divine control, there is a period of transition when your sincerity and surrender will be put to the test. The strength of such impulses as those of sex lies usually in the fact that people take too much notice of them; they protest too vehemently and endeavour to control them by coercion, hold them within and sit upon them. But the more you think of a thing and say, 'I don't want it, I don't want it', the more you are bound to it. What you should do is to keep the thing away from you, to dissociate from it, take

as little notice of it as possible and, even if you happen to think of it, remain indifferent and unconcerned.

The impulses and desires that come up by the pressure of Yoga should be faced in a spirit of detachment and serenity, as something foreign to yourself or belonging to the outside world. They should be offered to the Divine, so that the Divine may take them up and transmute them.

If you have once opened yourself to the Divine, if the power of the Divine has once come down into you and yet you try to keep to the old forces, you prepare troubles and difficulties and dangers for yourself. You must be vigilant and see that you do not use the Divine as a cloak for the satisfaction of your desires. … Wherever there is pretence, there is danger; you cannot deceive God. Do you come to God saying, 'I want union with you' and in your heart meaning 'I want powers and enjoyments'? Beware! You are heading straight towards the brink of the precipice. And yet it is so easy to avoid all catastrophe. Become like a child, give yourself up to the Mother, let her carry you, and there is no more danger for you.

This does not mean that you have not to face other kinds of difficulties or that you have not to fight and conquer any obstacles at all. Surrender does not ensure a smooth and unruffled and continuous progression. The reason is that your being is not yet one, nor your surrender absolute and complete. Only a part of you surrenders; and today it is one part and the next day it is another. The

whole purpose of the Yoga is to gather all the divergent parts together and forge them into an undivided unity. Till then you cannot hope to be without difficulties—difficulties, for example, like doubt or depression or hesitation. The whole world is full of the poison. You take it in with every breath. If you exchange a few words with an undesirable man or even if such a man merely passes by you, you may catch the contagion from him. It is sufficient for you to come near a place where there is plague in order to be infected with its poison; you need not know at all that it is there. You can lose in a few minutes what it has taken you months to gain. So long as you belong to humanity and so long as you lead the ordinary life, it does not matter much if you mix with the people of the world; but if you want the divine life, you will have to be exceedingly careful about your company and your environment." (CWM 3: 5–7)

D. Mastery over sex suggestions through the descent of purity and the higher consciousness

1. "It is the crude vital-physical that returns upon you in this way [*sexual suggestions*]—and these returns must be the cause of all the feeling of illness, weakness, tamas that you get. A purification of this part by the descent of the higher consciousness into it is a very great necessity for your sadhana." (CWSA 31: 518)

2. "There is a force of purity, not the purity of the moralist, but an essential purity of spirit, in the very substance of the being. When that comes, then sex-waves either cannot approach or they pass without imparting any impulse, without touching anywhere." (CWSA 31: 512)

3. "If it [*peace*] is established *all through*, then it brings purity and the purity throws off the sexual suggestions." (CWSA 31: 513)

4. "The sex exists for its own satisfaction and this or that person is only an excuse or occasion for its action or a channel for awakening its activity. It is from within, by the peace and purity from above coming into that part and holding it, that it must disappear." (CWSA 31: 487)

5. "The power of the psychic, however, can act upon the mind and vital and body, purifying thought and perception and emotion (which then becomes psychic feeling) and sensation and action and everything else in us and preparing them to be divine movements." (CWSA 28: 103)

6. "A purified mind and vital are the result of the action of the awakened and liberated psychic being but it is not itself the psychic." (CWSA 28: 112)

XXIX—Purity and Concentration Are Two Aspects, Passive and Active, of the Same Status of Being

1. "Along with purity and as a help to bring it about, concentration. Purity and concentration are indeed two aspects, feminine and masculine, passive and active, of the same status of being; purity is the condition in which concentration becomes entire, rightly effective, omnipotent; by concentration purity does its works and without it would only lead to a state of peaceful quiescence and eternal repose. Their opposites are also closely connected; for we have seen that impurity is a confusion of dharmas, a lax, mixed and mutually entangled action of the different parts of the being; and this confusion proceeds from an absence of right concentration of its knowledge on its energies in the embodied Soul. The fault of our nature is first an inert subjection to the impacts of things as they come in upon the mind pell-mell without order or control and then a haphazard imperfect concentration managed fitfully, irregularly with a more or less chance emphasis on this or on that object according as they happen to interest, not the higher soul or the judging and discerning intellect, but the restless, leaping, fickle, easily tired, easily distracted lower mind which is the chief enemy of our progress. In such a condition purity, the right working of the functions, the clear, unstained and luminous order of the being is an impossibility; the various

workings, given over to the chances of the environment and external influences, must necessarily run into each other and clog, divert, distract, pervert. Equally, without purity the complete, equal, flexible concentration of the being in right thought, right will, right feeling or secure status of spiritual experience is not possible. Therefore the two must proceed together, each helping the victory of the other, until we arrive at that eternal calm from which may proceed some partial image in the human being of the eternal, omnipotent and omniscient activity." (CWSA 23: 317–318)

2. "Concentration has three powers by which this aim can be effected. By concentration on anything whatsoever we are able to know that thing, to make it deliver up its concealed secrets; we must use this power to know not things, but the one Thing-in-itself. By concentration again the whole will can be gathered up for the acquisition of that which is still ungrasped, still beyond us; this power, if it is sufficiently trained, sufficiently single-minded, sufficiently sincere, sure of itself, faithful to itself alone, absolute in faith, we can use for the acquisition of any object whatsoever; but we ought to use it not for the acquisition of the many objects which the world offers to us, but to grasp spiritually that one object worthy of pursuit which is also the one subject worthy of knowledge. By concentration of our whole being on one status of itself,

we can become whatever we choose; we can become, for instance, even if we were before a mass of weaknesses and fears, a mass instead of strength and courage, or we can become all a great purity, holiness and peace or a single universal soul of Love; but we ought, it is said, to use this power to become not even these things, high as they may be in comparison with what we now are, but rather to become that which is above all things and free from all action and attributes, the pure and absolute Being." (CWSA 23: 318)

3. "If discipline of all the members of our being by purification and concentration may be described as the right arm of the body of Yoga, renunciation is its left arm. By discipline or positive practice we confirm in ourselves the truth of things, truth of being, truth of knowledge, truth of love, truth of works and replace with these the falsehoods that have overgrown and perverted our nature; by renunciation we seize upon the falsehoods, pluck up their roots and cast them out of our way so that they shall no longer hamper by their persistence, their resistance or their recurrence the happy and harmonious growth of our divine living. Renunciation is an indispensable instrument of our perfection." (CWSA 23: 326)

XXX—Great Mental Purity Is Required for the Capacity of Foresight

1. "Besides, one thing is certain: those who do not have these faculties and want to acquire them, for instance the capacity of foresight, foreseeing what is going to come, which is analogous to prophecy, the capacity to know events before they happen—as I said, there are people who have this spontaneously because of some peculiarity from birth—and if one wants to acquire them himself, that is to say, enter into contact with regions where these things can be seen—and not by chance or accidentally or without having any control over the thing, but on the contrary to see them at will—then this indeed means a *formidable* work. …

But when one wants to have a pure, correct information, to be in contact with the truth of things, and see in advance—not according to one's petty mental construction, but how things are decreed, in the place where they are decreed and the time when they are decreed—then that requires a *very great* mental purity, a *very great* vital equilibrium, an absence of desire, of preference. One must never want anything to be of one kind or another, for this falsifies your vision immediately.

All who have visions usually deform them, *all*, almost *without exception*. I don't think there is one in a million who doesn't deform his vision, because the minute it

touches the brain it touches the domain of preferences, desires, attachments, and this indeed is enough to give a colouring, a special look to what you have seen. Even if you have seen correctly, you translate it wrongly in your consciousness. This truly asks for a great perfection. But you can have perfection without the gift of vision. And the perfection can be as great without the gift as with it. If it interests you specially, you can make an effort to obtain it. But only if it interests you specially. … These are side issues which may be interesting, but in itself this is not the spiritual life; one may have a spiritual life without this. Now, the two together can give you perhaps a greater capacity. But for this too you must tell yourself, 'If I ought to have it—if I take the true attitude of surrender to the Divine and of complete consecration—if I ought to have it I shall have it. As, if I ought to have the gift of speech, I shall have it.' And in fact, if one is truly surrendered, in the true way and totally, at every minute one is what one ought to be and does what one ought to do and knows what one ought to know. This... but naturally, for this one should have overcome the petty limitations of the ego, and this does not happen overnight. But it can happen." (CWM 6: 353–355)

XXXI—After Purification: What Are the Benefits in Yoga

1. Purity helps in growth towards the Divine

"You can at least know that anger, jealousy, envy, restlessness, despair, indolence etc. are not divine things and that purity, peace, harmony, zeal, unselfishness etc., are good things and help the growth to the Divine." (CWSA 32: 63)

2. Stillness in meditation comes when there has been sufficient purification

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

3. Transformation is made possible through purification

"Transformation is made possible by purification." (CWSA 30: 43)

4. Continuity in the movement of purification is needed so that the psychic being may govern the whole nature

"It is necessary to lay stress on … things … (2) a continuance of the movement of purification so that the psychic being (the soul) may govern the whole nature, … Calm, psychic purity, bhakti and spiritual humility before the Divine are the three conditions." (CWSA 30: 45–46)

5. Purification of the outer nature helps the inner being to reveal itself and to open to the higher consciousness above

"Each time there is a purification of the outer nature, it becomes more possible for the inner being to reveal itself, to become free and to open to the higher consciousness above." (CWSA 30: 321)

6. Purity is one of the conditions for a complete opening of the psychic being

"Purity, simple sincerity and the capacity of an unegoistic unmixed self-offering without pretension or demand are the conditions of an entire opening of the psychic being." (CWSA 30: 349)

7. Purity can cause beings of the vital plane to disappear

"They [beings of the vital plane] do not have within them this psychic element which in man, even in the most debased, makes him respect what is beautiful and pure; even the basest man, in spite of himself, against his own will, respects what is pure, noble and beautiful. But those beings do not have that. They are wholly on the other side, totally on the other side. It disgusts them in every way. It is for them something which should not be touched, because it destroys; it is the thing that makes them disappear. Goodwill, sincerity, purity and beauty are things which make them disappear. So they hate these things." (CWM 5: 98–99)

8. The will for self-purification lights the psychic fire

"*Isn't the psychic fire always lit?*

It is not always lit.

Then how to light it?

By aspiration.

By the will for progress, by the urge towards perfection. Above all, it is the will for progress and self-purification which lights the fire. The will for progress. Those who have a strong will, when they turn it towards spiritual progress and purification, automatically light the fire within themselves." (CWM 8: 251)

9. One drop of pure Divine Consciousness entering the consciousness of the earth could change not only the inner life but the material conditions

"Now if there is awakened somewhere upon earth a receptivity and openness sufficient to bring down in its purity something of the Divine Consciousness, this descent and manifestation in matter can change not only the inner life, but the material conditions also, the physical expression in man and Nature. This descent does not depend for its possibility upon the condition of humanity as a whole. If we had to wait for the mass of humanity to reach a state of harmony, unity and aspiration, strong enough to bring down the Light and change the material conditions and the movement of Nature, there would be little hope. But there is a possibility that an individual or a small group or limited number may achieve the descent. It is not quantity or extension that matters. One drop of the

Divine Consciousness entering into the consciousness of the earth could change everything here." (CWM 3: 38)

10. The 'state of grace' is prepared by purification

"But the touch of grace, divine grace coming directly or through the Guru is a special phenomenon having two sides to it,—the grace of the Guru or the Divine, in fact both together, on one side and a 'state of grace' in the disciple on the other. This 'state of grace' is often prepared by a long tapasya or purification in which nothing decisive seems to happen, only touches or glimpses or passing experiences at the most, and it comes suddenly without warning." (CWSA 29: 195)

XXXII—Aspiration Is Truly Like a Great Purifying Flame of Will

1. "But aspiration always springs up like a flame that rises high and carries in itself the thing one desires to be or what one desires to do or desires to have. I use the word 'desire', but truly it is here that the word 'aspire' should be used, for that does not have either the quality or the form of a desire.

It is truly like a great purifying flame of will, and it carries in its core the thing that asks to be realised.

For instance, if you have done something you regret having done, if that has unhappy consequences which disturb things, and several people are implicated, you do not know the reactions of the others, but you yourself wish that what has been done may take a turn for the best, and that if there is a mistake, it may be understood, and that no matter what the mistake, this may be for you an opportunity for a greater progress, a greater discipline, a new ascent towards the Divine, a door open on a future that you want to be more clear and true and intense; so all this is gathered here (*pointing to the heart*) like a force, and then it surges up and rises in a great movement of ascent, and at times without the shadow of a formulation, without words, without expression, but like a springing flame." (CWM 5: 140–141)

2. "That is indeed an indication of complete inertia. Sri Aurobindo has written: 'If you cannot love God, at least find a way to fight with Him so that He may be your enemy' (implying that you are sure to be conquered by Him). It is a humorous remark, but it means that of all conditions, inertia is the worst.

Aspiration is the only remedy—an aspiration that rises constantly like a clear flame burning up all the impurities of the being." (CWM 16: 306–307)

3. "You should not hanker after these [occult experiences] or get disappointed and despondent because they do not yet come. These things can be left to come of themselves when the consciousness is ready. What you have to aspire to is bhakti, purification of the nature, right psychic consciousness and surrender. Aspire for bhakti and it will grow in you. It is already there within and it is that which expresses itself in your poetry and music and the feelings that rise up as in the temple of the Mother at the Cape." (CWSA 35: 629)

4. "Let your faith, your sincerity, your purity of aspiration be absolute and pervasive of all the planes and layers of the being; then every disturbing element and distorting influence will progressively fall away from your nature." (CWSA 32: 13)

XXXIII—One Must Confine Oneself to Sri Aurobindo's Works, or Else the Purity of His Teachings Is Diluted

1. "*Mother,*

May I tell the class about Thy wish that we should confine ourselves as far as possible to Sri Aurobindo's works only and give up our habit of comparative study both in philosophy and poetry, as it leads to much unconscious mixture and dilution of the purity of His teachings?

Certainly it is good to tell them the above.

My love and blessings." (CWM 17: 335)

2. "To respect the spiritual attainment of X [*another spiritual teacher*] is all right, but it is a rule of this Yoga not to mix influences (and what he [*a sadhak*] has described is very much like undergoing an influence). Otherwise there may be harm done by two different methods getting mixed together—e.g. the vital being awakened to a Bhakti-Ananda influence on that plane before it is purified and ready." (CWSA 29: 194–195)

XXXIV—In a State of Complete Purity, Black Magic Falls Back upon the Sender

1 "There is a misguided, perverted occultism which is called black magic, it is a thing one must never touch. But unfortunately, there are people who touch it through pure wickedness. You must not believe it is an illusion, a superstition; it is real. There are people who know how to do magic and do it, and with their magic they obtain altogether detestable results.... It is understood of course that when you have no fear and remain under protection, you are sheltered. But there is a 'when', there is a condition, and then if the condition is not always fulfilled, very unpleasant things may happen. So long as you are in a state full of strength, full of purity—that is, in a state of invincibility, if anybody does anything against you, that falls back upon him automatically, as when you throw a tennis-ball against the wall, it comes back to you; the thing comes back to them exactly in the same way, sometimes with a greater force, and they are punished by their own wickedness. But naturally it all depends on the person against whom the magic is done, on his inner force and purity.... I have come across such things, many cases like this. And in such cases, in order to resist, one must be, as I said, a warrior in the vital, that is, a spiritual fighter in the vital. All who do yoga sincerely must become that, and when they do become that, they are altogether sheltered.

But one of the conditions for becoming it is never to have bad will or a bad thought towards others. For if you have a bad feeling or bad will or a bad thought, you come down to their level and when you are on the same level with them, well, you may receive blows from them." (CWM 5: 178–179)

XXXV—What Represents Purity

A. The colour white represents purity

1. "The Divine Light from above is of various colours. White is the Divine Power of purity, blue the light of the spiritual consciousness, gold the hue of the supramental knowledge or of knowledge from the intermediate planes." (CWSA 30: 121)

2. "The four lights were the lights of the Truth,—white the purity and power of the divine Truth, green its active energy for work, blue the spiritual consciousness of the divine Truth, the gold its knowledge." (CWSA 30: 124)

3. "White indicates a force of purity." (CWSA 30: 124)

4. "The forces that come with white light are usually those of purity and peace." (CWSA 30: 124)

5. "The white sun indicates the purity and peace of the Divine Consciousness." (CWSA 30: 144)

6. "The cow in the occult symbolism indicates Light or the consciousness—white indicates the purified or spiritual consciousness—the white Light." (CWSA 30: 165)

7. "The red rose is the flower of love and surrender, the white is the purity of psychic love." (CWSA 30: 180)

8. "The correspondent wrote that in a dream the Mother put a large packet of saffron in her hand.

I told you saffron meant purification—so if it has any significance, it can only mean that the Mother gave you a power of purification to use." (CWSA 30: 180)

9. "The white Light is the Mother's light. Wherever it descends or enters, it brings peace, purity, silence and the openness to the higher forces. If it comes below the navel, that means that it is working in the lower vital." (CWSA 32: 265)

B. The Mother's diamond light is a light of absolute purity and power

1. "The Mother's diamond light is a light of absolute purity and power." (CWSA 32: 267)

C. Fire is always the fire of purification

1. "The fire is always the fire of purification—it is very red when it is acting on the vital; when the vital no longer

covers the psychic, then the rose colour of the psychic comes out more and more." (CWSA 30: 147)

2. "The psychic fire is the fire of aspiration, purification and tapasya which comes from the psychic being. It is not the psychic being, but a power of the psychic being." (CWSA 30: 368)

3. "The experience of the Fire is quite correct,—it is the great fire of purification and concentration (i.e. gathering up of the consciousness and turning it fixedly towards the Divine), the psychic fire which all must pass through so as to reach the Mother permanently and completely." (CWSA 30: 369)

4. "The fire you saw was again the psychic fire of purification and tapasya and the garland was the offering it was preparing for the Mother, the psychic and divine consciousness (pearl and diamond) in the sadhak. The beautiful place was also probably a symbol of the psychic and the lotus indicated the opening of the psychic consciousness." (CWSA 30: 369–370)

5. "It is the Agni fire that you feel. Agni is at once a fire of aspiration, a fire of purification, a fire of tapasya, a fire of transformation." (CWSA 30: 371)

6. "The fear of the fire you saw is misplaced, for it is the fire of the purifying Agni that you see burning and that does no harm; it only clears away what should not be there. That is why it is followed by a lightness or an emptiness. You have only to be quiet and let the fire do its work. The heat one feels at that time is not the heat of fever or any other morbid heat. Afterwards, as you felt, all becomes cool and light." (CWSA 30: 372)

7. "*Mother, I would like to know something about this flame of Agni*.

It is the flame of purification, the will for progress." (CWM 17: 80)

8. "There is a sacred fire that burns in the heart and envelops the whole being: it is Agni, who illumines and purifies all. I kindle that fire in you each time that you ask me for some progress; but it destroys nothing except falsehood and obscurity." (CWM 17: 104)

9. "The white fire is the fire of aspiration, the red fire is the fire of renunciation and tapasya, the blue fire is the fire of spirituality and spiritual knowledge which purifies and dispels the Ignorance." (CWSA 30: 147)

D. Water is the symbol of the power of purification

1. "The water is the symbol of the power of purification and no hostile being or force can resist this power handled with goodwill and sincerity." (CWM 12: 245)

2. "Water signifies many things such as fluidity, plasticity, suppleness, the purifying principle. It is the driving force and marks the beginning of organised life." (CWM 15: 40)

E. In the vital world, snow is the symbol of purity

1. "In the vital world, snow is the symbol of purity. It is the purity of their feelings and intentions that saves them from the great danger." (CWM 12: 245)

2. "The vision you saw of the snow is probably a symbol of the consciousness in a condition of purity, silence and peace like a snowy ground; in that a new life (psychic, spiritual as indicated by the flowers) appears in place of the old mental and vital life which has been covered by that mantle of snowy whiteness." (CWSA 30: 149)

3. "Q: Once I saw the Mother sitting on the peak of an icy mountain; a narrow path led there and I was gradually advancing towards that.

A: This is simply a symbol of the purity and silence of the higher consciousness which has to be reached by the path of sadhana. The narrowness symbolises the difficulty because one has not to slip to one side or the other, but go straight." (CWSA 32: 281)

F. The lamb represents purity

1. "It is a lamb, which means 'purity'." (CWM 15: 38)

G. Flower Jasmine represents purity

1. Flower Jasmine represents Purity

From *The Spiritual Significance of Flowers, Part I, page 114. Jasminum. White*

XXXVI—At Present, There Is upon Earth an Opportunity for Conscious Help with the Necessary Power

1. "Generally, when the time has come for a Karma to be conquered and absorbed by the Grace, there also comes the image or the knowledge or the experience of the exact facts that are the cause of the Karma, and then at that moment you can start the cleaning.

But it is just at the most painful point, there where the suggestions are the strongest, that you must bear the blow. Otherwise you will always have to start over again, always start over again.

One day a moment comes when the thing has to be done, when one must make the true inner gesture that liberates. To tell the truth, just now there is upon earth an opportunity which presents itself only after thousands of years, a conscious help with the necessary power. It was once believed that nothing had the power to wipe away the consequences of a Karma, that it was only by exhausting it through a series of purificatory acts that the consequences could be transformed, exhausted, effaced. But with the supramental power, this can be done without the need of going through all the steps of the process of liberation." (CWM 15: 373–374)

2. This courage, this heroism which the Divine wants of us, why not use it to fight against one's own difficulties, one's own imperfections, one's own obscurities? Why not heroically face the furnace of inner purification so that it does not become necessary to pass once more through one of those terrible, gigantic destructions which plunge an entire civilisation into darkness?" (CWM 9: 75)

XXXVII—Love Is More Powerful than the Power of Purification

1. "In this way it is not necessary to introduce the principle of love into the explanation. But if you want to know or understand the nature of the Force or the Power that enables or brings about this transformation—particularly where evil is concerned, but also with ugliness to a certain extent—you see that love is obviously the most potent and integral of all powers—integral in the sense that it applies in all cases. It is even more powerful than the power of purification which dissolves all bad will and which is, as it were, the master of the adverse forces, but which has not the direct power of transformation. The power of purification first dissolves in order to allow the transformation afterwards. It destroys one form in order to be able to create a better one, whereas love need not dissolve in order to transform; it possesses the direct power of transformation. Love is like a flame that changes what is hard into something malleable and even sublimates this malleable thing into a kind of purified vapour—it does not destroy, it transforms." (CWM 10: 72)

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