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PREFACE

In a way the whole of *Savitri* is Yoga. For apart from the yoga of Aswapati in its several phases, apart from Savitri’s quest in its successive movements, there is the yoga of the Earth aspiring for equation with the radiant Heavens, not to speak of the yoga of the luminous Truth-world to materialise itself on our globe. The selection here is made from the angle of the yoga of the individual which is, after all, the crux of all the dimensions of yoga.
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I

THE CALL
CALL

Heaven's call is rare, rarer the heart that heeds.

(XI.1)

Of the countless creatures on earth that are evolving in their consciousness, only some have reached a stage where they are ready for a transition from their human status into the divine. The perceiving Intelligence of the Divine in manifestation spots them out and a call goes forth to them to turn Godward. This call may take any form—from within, from without—through whatever instrumentation is at hand. But not all who are thus called, hear it in the midst of their life-turmoil; and even of those who hear, not all pay heed. Many are still enamoured of their chains, still attracted to the interests of the lower life; very few respond to the call and change the direction of their life.

ETERNITY SPEAKS

Eternity speaks, none understands its word.

(IV.3)

Men are so much engrossed in the crowded life of the senses that they are hardly aware of themselves as apart from the movements in which they are carried helter and skelter. Even the few who have become conscious of their mental selves
and stand or try to stand aloof from external life-movements, are lost in the noise of their own thought-activity and emotional turmoils. They are not aware of their soul nor of the intimations that come from it. The soul, delegate of the Eternal in the evolution that is in progress in time and space, speaks in its own language—a language of certainty, real vision, truth, but the surface person is hardly ever attentive to it. And even when the word manages to catch the inner ear, the necessary understanding to comprehend it is not there. It is usually interpreted or misinterpreted in the inferior terms of the working mind. The message is lost.

CHOSEN

*One among many thousands never touched,*  
*Engrossed in the external world’s design,*  
*Is chosen by a secret witness Eye*  
*And driven by a pointing hand of Light.*

(I.5)

There is an overseeing Eye that ever regards this scene of evolution, the innumerable movements and forms that take shape and pass out of the field. It watches to see which soul among the millions that are striving to grow and develop is ripening, ready for the leap from the human to the divine stage. It chooses him and takes direct charge of his
evolution. Whether he is aware of it or not, from the moment of this choice by the Divine, his life is guided and goaded towards one direction—the Divine. Slowly, through all circumstances and vicissitudes of life he is led by the guiding Hand to choose the Divine as his objective.

He who chooses the Infinite has been chosen by the Infinite. (Sri Aurobindo)

WHY?

Remember why thou cam’st:
Find out thy soul, recover thy hid self,
In silence seek God’s meaning in thy depths.
(VII.2)

Life is not an empty dream, a senseless movement. There is a purpose, a goal towards which our journey points. Man as an awakened being, a thinking creature, owes it to himself to know why he is here. He is not merely a body, not even a living body. He is a being that lives in the physical body, that thinks with an embodied mind. He is a soul, an undying self that stands concealed behind the veils of nature. Man must withdraw his gaze from outside and direct it inwards to find his soul; he must shut his hearing to the noises of the world and in silence listen to the intimations that come from within in order to know the meaning and
purpose of his existence on earth, to realise the mission entrusted by God to his soul.

PARADOX AND KEY

*Our life is a paradox with God for key.*

(I.4)

All life is a perpetual riddle with contraries clashing at every step. Good is opposed by evil, truth by falsehood, strength by weakness, joy by pain, harmony by disharmony, life by death; in every field there is strife and all the panaceas tried by the human intelligence have proved unavailing. The only solution to this problem of existence is in the evolution of our consciousness from the human state to the divine. The Divine is whole, unbroken existence, undeformed consciousness, unflawed force, unsullied bliss. And this Divine is within ourselves. The more we awaken to this indwelling Divine and grow into its nature, the nearer we are to the resolution of the problems of life in the harmony of the Spirit. The contrary elements either drop away or are changed in their character.

OUR HUMAN STATE

*Our human state cradles the future god,*

*Our mortal frailty an immortal force.*

(II.10)
Our human imperfections and limitations are not permanent; they are only the present circumstances which can be altered by will and effort. What we are at any given moment is only what has actualised at that stage from the various potentialities that we hold within ourselves. Our life is a long process of evolution of what is contained within us. The consciousness that has now reached the human stage holds within itself the seed of godhood. It is the urge of this hidden godhead that is truly responsible for man’s aspiration to exceed humanity and embody divinity. Similarly our death-bound weakness is only a stage in the development of our immortal force that is gradually working its way.

The immediate formations or appearances should not blind and discourage the seeker. Immense potentials await manifestation.

PURPOSE

*There is a purpose in each stumble and fall.*

(X.4)

Life is not always a smooth and uninterrupted journey. There are ups and downs, interruptions, haltings—short or long—and they are usually due to some lag in our total movement. Some parts advance more in their spiral of progress, a few lag behind. This gap results in arrested movements.
If one is vigilant and awake, especially in spiritual life, one can perceive why and how the stumble has come about. It exposes some weakness, some leeway to be made up, so that one is better fitted to pursue the path on the rectification of the deficiency.

Stumblings and falls are not to be dismissed as mere accidents. They are indications and warnings to the seeker to look into himself and equip himself more adequately.

GOAL

for each his difficult goal
Hewn out of infinite possibility.
(VI.1)

Each soul has its own line of development, its own need of experiences and its own goal. The ultimate goal of all souls is to manifest the Divine Reality from which they have been emanated with a purpose. And this manifestation is not of a uniform kind. It is a growing revelation of the multitude of possibilities inherent in the Supreme Being. Each soul carries a stress implanted in it by the creative Will and it labours to work out the Idea, the Real-Idea implanted in it, in its field of evolution in time and space.

Thus for each his labour and his goal.
OUR FORGOTTEN VASTNESSES

A deathbound littleness is not all we are:
Immortal our forgotten vastnesses
Await discovery in our summit selves;
Unmeasured breadths and depths of being are ours.

(I.4)

Our life is normally limited to the range of our physical body. Its span is bound up with the duration of the body. But these limitations are not final. We have within ourselves ranges of existence which far exceed the outer bounds. They are natural to our inner being, but in the ignorance in which we are involved we are not aware of them, we have forgotten them. We need to awaken to their existence within. When by yoga we turn within, we become increasingly aware of these ranges of unlimited consciousness, unbroken by external events, in the depths of our being, in the ascending heights of ourselves. We can expand laterally in the universe, we can plumb within the profound of the being, we can rise above the limits of our mind.

SOUL

Our souls can climb into the shining planes,
The breadths from which they came can be our home.

(II.11)

We lead a restricted life only as long as we limit ourselves to the small range of our physical
faculties through which we normally function. But within ourselves there are faculties that have a larger range, greater potentialities. The soul in our depths is not confined to the walls of the physical body. It can soar into regions that open above the lid of the mind; it can spread out into the vastitudes from which it came originally. If we become aware of the soul and unite our consciousness with it, we too can participate in its experience of the luminous worlds above and the infinities that are native to it.

TRIUNE BEING

To the abiding and eternal is their climb.
To the pure existence everywhere the same,
To the sheer consciousness and the absolute force
And the unimaginable and formless bliss...
..... the triune being who is all and one.
(VII.5)

The ascent of the pilgrim of the Spirit is to the Permanent, the Eternal who stands immutable behind and above all the mutations in time and space. This Reality reveals itself to be triune in this manifestation: it is a self-existence, sat, that bases all existence; it is supremely self-aware and all-aware, a pure consciousness, chit, that is potent with a force of effectuation, tapas; its nature is of
causeless and endless bliss, ananda. This triune Being, Satchidananda, is realised to be at once the sole Truth and also the whole Truth.

**ABSOLUTES**

*Each part in us desires its absolute:*

*Our thoughts cover the everlasting Light,*

*Our strength derives from an omnipotent Force.*

(II.5)

Admittedly we are limited beings, limited in consciousness, limited in power, limited in range, limited in effectivity. But our being does not accept this limitation as ultimate and natural. Each part wants to grow, to increase to its optimum. It makes the effort to reach its utmost possible perfection, its absolute. Our mind tries to think of the nature of the Reality and arrive at its knowledge; but its thought-activity only serves to obscure and veil the Light, the

*immortal Light set inward for seeing, a swiftest mind within in men that walk on the way.*

(Rig. Veda, I.6.5)

The mind has to learn to still its thoughts so that it can reflect the pure and lasting Light instead of catching fleeting and flawed glimpses of it. So too our puny strength is not satisfied to remain in its cabined state. It is aware in its depths that it
is a fragment, a fraction of a Force that is all-powerful. And it struggles to develop, to link itself with its Source. Thus the Law is of growth, growth of the imperfect to the perfect, of the relative to the Absolute.

PERFECTION

To seize the absolute in shapes that pass,
To feel the eternal's touch in time-made things,
This is the law of all perfection here.

(II.2)

Perfection is the divine intention in life and it is the goal towards which all existences on earth labour, consciously or unconsciously. To the spiritual seeker perfection means to be able to perceive the divine absolute in all the relativities of the world; things are not independent realities by themselves, but they are not, on that account, illusory. They are shapes that are assumed by the Absolute which gives them their raison d'être. Similarly behind all the objects that are born in time and subject to the workings of time, the seeker must learn to feel the presence of the Timeless Reality which is not affected by changes of form in the process of time. The Permanent is for ever.
CROWN FOR EARTH

Beyond the earth, but meant for delivered earth,
Wisdom and joy prepare their perfect crown.
Truth superhuman calls to thinking man.

(X.3)

The little knowledge and the petty mixed pleasures yielded by the life on earth are not the last word. Beyond the borders of this life in ignorance, there are truths of full knowledge and unalloyed bliss that man can attain on liberation from the limitations of the earthly nature. But it is not required to reject the life on earth, in order to attain the higher truths. They are in fact meant to manifest on earth and are preparing for it. They call to the awakened man to develop his consciousness so that he may receive and contain them, express and organise them in his life in this world.

YEARNING

A formless yearning passions in man’s heart,
A cry is in his blood for happier things.

(II.4)

Whether he is aware of it in his mind or not, there is always a discontent in the being of man with his state of imperfection, limitation and want. Deep down in his heart there is a persistent and gnawing feeling of inadequacy and a vague, restless urge
towards a fullness. This impulse translates itself into a desire for growth, for expansion, a hunger for freedom and strength, an aspiration for progress and felicity. It is because of this innate urge towards perfection that man is ever on the move forward in the evolutionary course. He is unique because of this divine discontent. As Sri Aurobindo observes elsewhere, the animal is satisfied with the modicum of its necessities and the gods are content with their splendours. Man alone is seized by this yearning for self-exceeding which puts him at the head of evolutionary Nature.

EXILES

_We live self-exiled from our heavenlier home._

(II.11)

Though the world in which we live and move is a place of mortal suffering and unhappiness, as it stands organised at present, we ourselves are not creatures entirely of this home of pain and obscurity. We have parts in us that exceed the earthly limits and bespeak of a non-earthly origin. The soul and the various other elements of the consciousness that are emerging to the surface are derived from the Spirit which is immortal and infinite. Due to ignorance and the separativity based upon it, we are not aware of our source, our supernal origin.
We have lost the active relation with our true home of light and bliss. We have to get back to it by a sustained effort of reversal of consciousness. Till then we live self-exiled from our luminous Home.

**GOD’S BLISS**

*Indifference, pain and joy, a triple disguise,*  
*Attire of the rapturous Dancer in the ways*  
*Withhold from thee the body of God’s bliss.*

(VI.2)

All life is sustained by a basic undercurrent of the bliss of the creative Divine. The universe has come into being, is maintained and moved on its course by the play of Ananda in the depths. But we miss this note of delight because we do not live fully and freely. We live divided from each other, separated from our source and we respond to the contacts of life in half-hearted, deformed reactions of pain, pleasure or indifference. We are unable to meet them in the right way that would make them yield their natural delight; our muted and arrested reactions have become a habit and we miss the true sense of the Delight of Existence which the Creator ever enjoys in his play of manifestation and in which we are intended to partake.

The more we outgrow our separative ignorance and move nearer to the truth of oneness, the easier will it be to breathe and live in this All-Bliss.
RULE

Well is the unconscious rule for the animal breeds
Content to live beneath the immutable yoke;
Man turns to a nobler walk, a master path.

(X.4)

It is well for creatures whose consciousness is still on a lower level and not organised for articulation to submit to and be governed by the laws of Nature. But in man the faculties are formed for self-organisation and self-direction; he is intended to exceed the rules of Nature meant for a lower order of evolution and hew his own path. Man has to break out of the scaffoldings of Nature for his consciousness to grow and find its own movement and goal.

SOUL

At last the soul turns to eternal things,
In every shrine it cries for the clasp of God.

(X.3)

The soul gathers experience from life, assimilates its essence and grows in stature. It touches every level of existence, experiences a wide variety of objects and evolves itself. A moment comes, however, when it is satisfied by these experiences of a transient nature and it turns to things that are more lasting. It turns to the Divine, it seeks the
touch and the experience of the Divine in the world around. It strives to perceive the presence of the Divine in every form, greet the Divine in every movement, grasp the Hand of the Divine in every embodiment. Spiritual life then begins in earnest.

ETERNAL

*Hidden in the mortal’s heart the Eternal lives.*

(VI.2)

Man is mortal, true, but everything of him is not mortal. There is in him, at the core of his being, something immortal, an element, an entity, a soul that does not cease with the ceasing of the body. And in truth this soul, this inmost being—a portion of the Divine, a projection of the Eternal—is the true man. The rest of his being—his mind, his emotional part, his vital and his physical parts—is only his instrumental nature which needs to be changed when it no longer serves or is not able to serve the purpose of the soul.

It is because of the presence of this divine, immortal soul within him that man has a persistent feeling of the possibility of overcoming mortality and he is pushed to take steps to share more and more the character of the undying soul in his higher and profounder movements.
OUR TRUTH

Our greater truth of being lies behind.
(VII.6)

We are not the material body alone. That we have and the material has its own truth. We are the activating life as well and life has its own truth. We are the mind also and mind has its own truth. Thus there are many parts to our being, levels of consciousness and each has its own truth. But the truth that is deeper, larger and greater than all is behind all these, in the inmost being; it is the soul. We have to arrive at this truth of truths by a progressive development of our consciousness.

BEATITUDE

Near and real to the longing heart
And to the body's passionate thought and sense
Are the hidden kingdoms of beatitude.
(II.3)

We seek for happiness, for joy. The emotions of the heart flow out searching for felicities; the thoughts and imaginations of the mind are ever on that track; the passions of the vital and the senses of the body strive to snatch whatever bits of pleasure they can grasp. But what they all succeed in seizing are only half-bits of fleeting pleasures and excitements. And that is so because the real happiness is within ourselves, unnoticed by us. Near and close
to our heart, mind and body, behind the veils, below the surfaces, flow currents of perennial beatitude. They are the natural outflowings of the soul. If we turn our gaze towards them, leaving for a while the fevered excitements of the outer nature, we begin to grow aware of this Felicity within us.

HIDDEN GREATNESSES

There are greatnesses hidden in our unseen parts
That wait their hour to step in life's front.
(VII.2)

The limitations with which we are beset are not final. They do not exhaust our possibilities. Behind and above the range of our human faculties circumscribed in many ways, are powers and capacities that are higher and larger. They lie latent because they are not activised, not brought to the front. The outer nature is not ready, not processed and strengthened enough to permit the functioning of these deeper powers. Once the consciousness is developed and nature organised accordingly, they reveal themselves and come into operation, opening new vistas, new dimensions in our life.
ASCENT

But first the spirit's ascent we must achieve
Out of the chasm from which our nature rose.

(II.5)

Before any spiritual realisation can be attained, it is indispensable that we first liberate ourselves from the multiple hold of the lower nature which keeps us chained to the clamps of inertia, obscurity, inconscience. Our nature has emerged from a state of nescience, insentience and that primal character sticks to us for a long stretch of the upward evolutionary course, handicapping the embodied spirit by its constant downward pull. It is essential to release ourselves from this subjection and rise above the rule of Ignorance so that the consciousness may freely soar and evolve into its higher terms. By concentration, by meditation, an opening must be effected in the mind and above it so that the ascent of the spirit becomes possible.

OUR CLIMB

To eternal light and knowledge meant to rise,
Up from man's bare beginning is our climb.

(II.10)

The life of man is a series of climbs from level to level of being, grade to grade of consciousness. In his primitive beginnings he is hardly conscious of himself, he lives a mechanical existence caught
up in the petty round of his physical needs and immediate interests. He is full of inertia and obscurity and needs the goad of desire to move forward. Nature forces him to exert himself and strive if he is to survive the struggle for existence, and in this process he begins to grow in his power, his consciousness, his being. With the development of the mind and other faculties, he takes conscious steps towards his growth and the expansion of his interests. From the shadows of inconscience and flashes of half-lights he moves towards eternal Light, from ignorance and falsehood towards Knowledge and Truth.

ADVENTURE

Content abide not with one conquered realm;
Adventure all to make the whole world thine,
To break into greater kingdoms turn thy force.

(VII.6)

Life is endless quest, an adventure without stop. Each territory covered, each victory won, opens the way for fresh territories, greater victories. The heroic man does not stay content with what he has attained. He pushes his oars further on, enters larger expanses, gaining more experiences, growing with his labours. This is particularly so in the spiritual sphere. Many are the realisations of the Divine that are open to the aspiring soul. The
Reality is infinite and as one ascends the Hill of the Being, each plateau reached reveals the still wider vistas lying ahead:

*When one climbeth from plateau to plateau a rich activity expresses itself.*

*(Rig Veda, 1.10.2)*

Lesser spirits may choose to rest in wayside stations, but not so he who seeks to realise the Divine in its plenitude. He strives, like the Aryan of yore; to scale peak after peak, plane after plane of the cosmic manifestation and enriches himself with the limitless glories of the Spirit.

**REPOSE**

*Our life's repose is in the Infinite;*
*It cannot end, its end is life supreme.*

*(II.6)*

Our life is not an ephemeral existence that comes to an end with the fall of the body. The body may disintegrate and die but life continues in other forms, other bodies. It cannot rest until it reaches its goal and that goal is to arrive in consciousness at infinite existence. From the finite life to grow and blossom into the infinite, in being, in consciousness, in force, in delight—to live an unbounded life in an unbounded consciousness is the goal of
our soul's journey. Only then does our struggle and effort cease and the effortless manifestation of the Supreme becomes possible.

**NO REST**

*There is no rest for the embodied soul,*  
*It must live on, describe all Time's huge curve.*  

(III.6)

The soul takes repeated births and enters into new bodies in order to gain experience and evolve itself towards its Godhead. Each soul, when it is launched by the Eternal into their manifestation in Time, is charged to complete its mission in the enlarging process of Time. It can have no respite, no cessation from effort as long as it is in embodiment. It must act, it must move, it must grow.

**BLISS**

*Time shall see the quivering of the spirit's endless bliss.*  

(XI.1)

When the being realises its real nature which is none other than an eternal existence, a sheer consciousness and a self-existent bliss, all life turns into a rhythm of this Bliss. Each moment in time becomes a throb of this Bliss of the eternal Spirit.
PILGRIMAGE (I)

Make of thy daily way a pilgrimage,
For through small joys and griefs thou mov'st
towards God.
(VI.2)

The Path to God is not something to be hewed away from life. Life itself is the Path. Life is to be converted into a sacred pilgrimage—adhvaram of the Veda—with the body as the carriage, the life-energies as the steeds and the purified Will, Agni, as the leader of the journey. The journey is from ineffective existence to meaningful life, from darkness to Light, from death to Immortality. All the circumstances and vicissitudes of life must be accepted as significant contributors to the total movement Godward. The little joys and griefs that characterise the daily life of man are not to be feared and shunned as so many booby-traps and danger-pits, but accepted as experiences that are utilised by the soul for its growth towards the Godhead. For every incident, every happening has a significance for the seeker and taken in the right spirit, it contributes to the upward evolution of the being. Thus does all life convert itself into a pilgrimage to the Supreme.
PILGRIMAGE (II)

.... a tranquil pilgrimage,
Each year a mile upon the heavenly Way,
Each dawn opens into a larger Light.

(VI.I)

The pilgrimage to the Spirit has indeed its ups and downs, encounters pleasant and unpleasant, days and nights of consciousness. But once the commitment is made final and the surrender to the guiding Power complete, the movement turns into a tranquil, steady journey. There is no fevered impatience, no violent attempt to storm ahead. One knows that the Path is long, but each day, each period of time, marks a further step taken, a farther distance covered on the Way that is securely set for the glories of the Divine Kingdom. There is a steady increase of the Higher Consciousness, its power, its light; one illumination follows another, each greater and vaster than the previous one. Greater than the Dawn of yesterday, the Dawn of today prepares for the still greater Dawn of tomorrow. As chants the Rishi of yore:

*Break forth into light a bearer of treasures,*
*O daughter of heaven, as once thou brokest forth,—*
*O greater still in thy force, in the sonhood of the birth of knowledge, in the inspired hearing of the Truth.*

(Rig Veda, 5.79.3)
GOAL

*Always a nameless goal beckons beyond.*

(II.10)

We set objectives before ourselves, decide what is to be our goal in life. But these choices are more or less determined by our environmental influences or the preferences of our limited intelligence. They do not always correspond to the deeper truth of our being which alone knows what is its destination. Besides in the developing evolutionary movement that is our life on earth, there cannot be one goal; there are a series of goals, each pointing to the next, the road of the journey always tending to pass into the Unknown. For the known for which we can chart the course is after all a segment compared to the much that is covered and still to be known—bhuri kartvam.* Always that nameless, indeterminable beyond calls us to push ahead.

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*Rig Veda, 1.10.2*
II

CONDITIONS
CONSENT

*I shall save earth, if earth consents to be saved.*

(VII. 4)

The Grace of God is ever turned towards his beings in creation. But it can function and become effective only if the recipients are ready to accept and collaborate with the workings of this Higher Power. If they turn their backs upon it, if they are content to eke out their existence in their customary lower rounds of life, there is little that the Grace can do except to wait for them to awake or be stung into awakening by the buffets and shocks of life. Men must first want to be saved and be ready to pay the price for it before they can be truly saved.

ASPIRATION

*Aspiring he transcends his earthly self.*

(VII. 2)

It is because man wants to get what he has not, acquire what he needs, achieve what he is short of, that he activises his will in that direction and exerts himself. He aspires. And what he aspires for he is able to attain to in the measure of his sincerity. If his aspiration is confined to only a part of him e.g., mind or heart, if it flags at the first obstruction or disappointment and he lets it die, no progress is possible. But if he is earnest, takes steps to instil
his aspiration for things or states beyond his present self in all the members of his being e.g., mind, heart, vital, body, if he perseveres against odds and insists on aspiring relentlessly, he is sure to exceed his earthly state and grow into higher dimensions of being.

Such an aspiration is the first requirement of spiritual life. It is the flame which keeps the endeavour alive, a tongue of Agni darting forward and upward, burning up all earthly stuff as its fuel.

SOUL-URGE

A secret labouring glow of nascent fire.

(X. 3)

The soul is a spark of the Divine Consciousness. This spark is ever trying to grow into a flame and assert itself, inform the whole being with its warmth and radiant purity. The labour of this hidden spark to develop into an entity and emerge as the Agni who is the leader of the march, the summoner of the Gods, the Son of the body, is the real driving force behind the evolutionary development of man. In yoga this nascent fire burns as a consuming aspiration to grow and reach the parent Divine. All the life-movements are thrown as fuel into this shining flame.
MYSTIC FIRE

Then kindling the gold tongue of sacrifice,
Calling the powers of a bright hemisphere,
We shall shed the discredit of our mortal state,
And clear the darkness with the mystic Fire.

(II. 5)

Agni, the fire of aspiration, the flaming power of will, is to be awakened in our being and kept constantly burning. All movements of life are poured into this central Fire which burns up the dross of our impurities and enables us to offer the best in us in response to its call. Our self-offerings build our being anew in terms of light, power, joy, immortality. And as the powers of Agni work to establish these higher states of consciousness in us, the mortalities and darknesses of our lower nature get naturally displaced.

FLAME OF ASPIRATION

Once kindled never can its flaming cease.

(II. 12)

Deep in man is the longing of the soul to reach its source in the Divine. But it is submerged under a host of desire-movements and ego impulsions of nature in ignorance. The first steps towards the inner life of the spirit start with the kindling of this flame of aspiration within. It is kindled by the Grace
through any instrumentation e.g., a word, an experience, the impact of a teacher and so on. Once this is done, there is really no turning back. The flame burns upwards carrying with it all that feeds it, casting its glow on all that is not yet ready. Even when eclipsed by contrary movements in the outer life, it continues to flame within, waiting for its hour to re-emerge and act unveiled.

**DREAMS**

*Dreams that are hints of unborn Reality.*

(VII. 3)

All dreams are not fantasies or a confused jumble of our own subconscious impressions and desires. There are dreams which are of another order. They are transcriptions of contacts or impacts of realities that we experience in our sleep. Freed from the trammels of physical body, our subtle parts travel in the subtler worlds that open to us in states of dream and sleep and there they undergo experiences which have some truth in them. They are not reflexes of the movements during our waking states. They are, on the other hand, indications, signs of workings or happenings on the higher planes where things are preparing to manifest on earth. These dreams are pointers to impending events.
Contradicted by the human law,
A faith in things that are not and must be . . .
The child of the secret soul's forbidden desire
Born of its amour with eternity.

(II. 11)

Faith is indispensable, faith in the existence of the Divine, faith in the certainty of the realisation of the Divine, faith in one's own possibility of union with the Divine. This faith may be contradicted by the mind's reason which insists upon material proof before it accepts anything as real. But the faith insists upon its right to believe that what may not be immediately sensible or verifiable according to empirical laws, is still true and cannot be denied. For this faith is born of the perception of the deeper being, the soul. The soul behind the exterior veils has its own glimpses, its own contact with the Divine and this fact, its testimony—and based upon it, the aspiration of the soul to attain the Divine—reaches out to the surface being as unshakeable faith. This faith is the unfailing plank in the inner life beset with situations that are apt to spread doubt and disbelief and create confusion in the mind.

Faith wells up from the soul stationed in the depths of the heart:

Verily, in the heart is Faith founded.
(Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, 3.9.21)
PURITY

Heaven’s joys might have been earth’s if earth were pure.

(II. 3)

We cannot hold the felicities of Heaven, infallible knowledge, immutable peace, unbounded power, pure bliss as long as we are limited in our nature and divided in our being by ignorance, desire, egoism. These vestiges of our roots in the inconscience and obscurity have to be eliminated from ourselves before the characteristic verities of the Divine Nature can establish themselves and manifest in us without being diluted and vitiated by their opposites from the lower nature.

We must purify ourselves in all the parts of our being before we can hope to receive and embody fully the unbroken joys of the Spirit.

DELIGHT

How shall the mighty Mother her calm delight
Keep fragrant in this narrow fragile vase
Or lodge her sweet unbroken ecstasy
In earths which earthly sorrow can assail?

(X. 4)

It is not possible to receive and contain the divine bliss in the vessel of the human body unless it is prepared for it. A mind that is narrow, restless
and runs after external distractions, a heart that is subject to the gusts of earthly pleasure and pain, a life-energy that is uncontrolled and tends to go wild at the least provocation, a physical body that is weak and impure—not baked to consistency in the fire of askesis, atapta tanuh—cannot hold the Delight of God without spilling it or themselves breaking down under its intensity. The consciousness has to be widened, the instrumental nature calmed, purified cultured, and be full of equanimity if the inpouring delight is to be held naturally and increasingly.

DELIGHT

The dire delight that could shatter mortal flesh,
The rapture that the gods sustain.

(II. 9)

The spiritual ecstasy that pours down from above or swells out from within as the yoga develops, cannot be compared to human rapture. That ecstasy has an intensity that the normal human body is unable to sustain. An unprepared body, atapta tanu, says the Vedic seer\(^1\) spills this divine ecstasy and breaks to pieces under its pressure.

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\(^1\) An unbaked body, is the expressive phrase (Rig Veda, 9.83.1).
Only a purified and concentrated consciousness—as of the gods—can contain and manifest this delight. The body has to be made strong, the vitality gathered without being allowed to squander itself, the mind established in an unshakeable calm, before this spiritual ecstasy can be embodied.

HUMAN LIMITS

Only in human limits man lives safe.

(IX. 1)

Man can live securely his life in ignorance as long as he confines himself to the boundaries of that ignorance. His normal existence is served by the senses and faculties of mind, life and body proper to the narrow range of awareness and action that are natural to his superficial living. Were he to exceed these limits, his finite life would be open to the invasion of the infinite around and his precarious balance would be upset. He would be sucked into the larger universal movement pressing upon him, out of the cloistered safety in his ego-determined bounds.

The seeker of the Infinite has to break out of this narrow circle of safety by discarding the imprisoning mould of his primitive life in ignorance.
BREAK OUT

Out of earth’s heavy smallness we must break,
We must search our nature with spiritual fire.

(II.10)

As a result of overpowering ignorance and the action of the ubiquitous ego we feel divided in our being from all in the universe. We tend to feel ourselves separate from everything else and live in constriction, guarding ourselves from what we conceive to be ‘others’, discouraging movements that threaten our self-imposed isolation with the result that we do not expand in our being, we do not progress. Not only in the mind, not only in the emotions, the vital, but even in the subconscious and the physical we hug our smallness. To remedy this situation, we must look into ourselves, search out all the corners of our being, the veiled parts of our nature, with the burning light of the soul and exercise our enlightened will to break down the earthly, constricting walls wherever they are found. For to be enclosed is to be arrested in our being; to extend ourselves is to grow. Says the Upanishad:

_The little is mortal, the vast is the immortal._

(Chhandogya Up. 7.24.1)
NOT FOR SELF ALONE

But not for self alone the self is won.
(VII.6)

Spiritual realisation and freedom from the limitations of Ignorance are not sought for for one’s own personal benefit. The liberation of others, the rest of one’s fellowmen, is also the concern of the seeker. If he lays stress at the beginning on his own perfection, it is because he cannot truly help others as long as he is himself imperfect and blinded by the movements of the lower nature:

Those who dwell shut within the ignorance and they hold themselves for learned men thinking “We, even we are wise and the sages”—fools are they and they wander around beaten and stumbling like blind men led by the blind.
(Mundaka Upanishad, 1.2.8)

His own liberation, self-realisation, is an indispensable step for his help to others to become effective. Essentially he is one in consciousness with the consciousness of others; it is only the separative walls of ego that shut him off from others. Once these barriers are struck down with the emergence of the true self, the light, the power and the strength that proceed from the self-attainment spontaneously reach out to those who are less fortunate. Man is a part of the collectivity and he owes it to it that he contributes his best to its progress. To fail to honour this obligation is to be guilty of spiritual selfishness.
ALL LIFE ONE

A subtle link of union joins all life.

(II.2)

Despite appearances to the contrary, there is a substantial oneness of life in the universe. The divisions between form and form, individual and individual, are all on the gross surface. Deeper there is a link that makes all one. There is one universal Matter of which all material forms are constructions, one universal stream of Life of which all individual lives are currents, one universal Mind of which all minds are projections, one Soul of which all souls are portions. Besides there is a pervading Consciousness which holds all and keeps them together. This basic oneness is realised even on the surface level as the consciousness develops and deepens.

BEYOND TIME AND SPACE

His soul must be wider than the universe
And feel eternity as its very stuff.

(VII.6)

He who would be one with the Divine and embody the Divine Consciousness for action in the world, must first change his all-too human nature into the divine. He must exceed the physical, vital and mental limitations of his surface being and personality and extend his consciousness wider and
wider till he not only embraces the universe but ever grows wider than it so that he contains it in his self, his luminous soul. He should transcend the boundaries of space. Similarly he must break out of his bounds in time. He must grow into a consciousness that is not broken by interruptions of death but is one with the eternal Self at its core. For the Self is constituted of the divine substance which is eternal and immortal.

BEYOND TIME AND SPACE

Only when Eternity takes Time by the hand,  
Only when infinity weds the finite’s thought,  
Can man be free from himself and live with God.  
(VII.4)  

Man lives severely limited by the bounds of time. He is also enclosed in the walls of a finite embodiment. Whatever elbow room he makes for himself in life by dint of his effort has to be within these ever-present constrictions. True freedom can begin only when he extends himself in his consciousness beyond both time and space. He can and must exceed in his consciousness the triple formulation of time, take his stand in the Self which is eternal, immutable. Similarly he must learn to live in his inner being which over-flows the finite complex of body-life-mind that constitutes his external being.
To the extent he thus succeeds in living in the Eternal and participating in the Infinite, he is liberated; he dwells in God.

**ABOVE FORM**

*The soul must soar sovereign above the form
And climb to summits beyond mind’s half-sleep.*

(II.5)

In its state of ignorance the soul is a prisoner in form. The form contains the soul and life is a series of transactions on the level of form-based contacts and form-governed perceptions and conceptions. The result is that all experience and knowledge is superficial, with the soul shut in. The soul must be helped to break through its form which is intended to be its vehicle and not its shell. Only then will it be able to develop naturally and project its consciousness directly in the world. It has also to learn to go beyond the limits of the mechanical mind and enter into the higher mental ranges opening to the heights of the spirit.

**SURRENDER**

*A deep surrender is their source of might.*

(I.4)

The demands of Yoga, particularly the Yoga which calls for a total change of nature and the
assumption of the lower human by the higher divine Nature, are too exacting for the puny strength of man to meet unaided. He seeks the aid of the higher Power. And to do this effectively he surrenders himself to it: he lays open his will, his mind, his whole being—in its depths and heights—to that Power, he makes himself unreservedly open to its workings. His entire being is suffused with this spirit and action of self-giving:

To thee, O Flame! we day by day, in the night and in the light, come, carrying by our thought the obeisance.

(Rig Veda, I. I. 7)

As a result of this link-up, the higher Power begins to work in him increasingly in all its amplitude. He acts no longer on his own strength and resources; it is the Power, the Strength, the Light to which he has surrendered himself that act in and through him. And there is no limit to their efficacy.

WORSHIP

Worship lifts the worshipper’s bowed strength
Close to the god’s pride and bliss his soul adores.

(II.3)

When one worships the Deity or the Power that one adores, it is not a mere ritual of expressing one’s
devotion. It is an act of self-surrender, the giving of all that one has and is to the adored. In the process one’s own puny strength is increased and brought close to the strength and stature of the worshipped. It begins to vibrate with the power and consciousness of the Higher Puissance and becomes a channel for the action of the greater Might.

ADORATION

_The throb of one adorations’s single bliss
In a rapt ether of undying love._

(II.14)

Adoration is not ritual worship. It is an inner state of communion between the adored and the adorer. The link between the two is formed of a melting love for the object of adoration. It is an uninterrupted flow of consciousness on the crest of the pure emotions of the heart, a steady stream of thought untouched by any kind of self-regarding movement. It is a spontaneous rising of the soul, gathering all the rest of the being, in its swelling movement of joyous self-giving and identification with the single object of its adoration.
FEET

All Nature dumbly calls to her alone
To heal with her feet the aching throb of life.

(III.3)

The Feet of the embodied Divine, or of the Guru representing the Divine, have a special significance in the manifestation of the Spirit. They are the chosen channel for the flow and transmission of the Power and Energy characteristic of the embodiment. More than through any other part e.g. hands, eyes, speech etc. it is through the feet that a concentrated charge goes out to those who touch them.

It is the adored feet of the Divine Mother that have, time and again, trod the earth and healed the ache and pain of earth’s life whenever it became unbearable.

SHAKTI

All Nature dumbly calls to her alone
To heal with her feet the aching throb of life
And break the seals on the dim soul of man
And kindle her fire in the closed heart of things.

(III.2)

This omnipresent Shakti is the Divine Mother whom Nature in labour invokes. It is for her to soothe and heal with her innate bliss the aches and
wounds of life; it is she alone who in her power can finally break the seals of ignorance and in conscience stamped on the soul of man; it is again she who in her flowing consciousness can light the fire of aspiration in the heart of things covered by the smoke of obscurities and nescience.

WILL

*Above blind fate and the antagonist powers*

*Moveless there stands a high unchanging Will.*

(III.4)

Life is full of battling forces and clashing possibilities. The fate that past energies have forged and the struggle of the dual powers of good and evil, truth and falsehood, leave little freedom to the initiative of the individual. But a deeper view perceives high above these conflicting movements a divine Will that is immutable and over-riding. As one develops in consciousness, one links one's own will to this divine Will and thus rises above the whorl of the workings of the lower nature.

PRAYER

*A magic leverage suddenly is caught*

*That moves in the veiled Ineffable's timeless will.*

(I.2)

When we find that our own human will is too feeble and limited to achieve what we seek, we
concentrate, we gather all our energies to make a supreme effort; or we pray and keep ourselves collected and open to the Higher Power to which we address ourselves. Suddenly we find that we are able to achieve. That is because our being has been able, through this exercise, to contact the Supreme Will of the Divine which stands behind all movements unseen. Our will fuses for the moment with that Will and moves it in our favour. The art is to find this leverage of prayer that connects the lower will with the Higher Will.

**PRAYER**

*A prayer, a master act, a king idea*

*Can link man's strength to a transcendent Force.*

(I.2)

Man's strength is limited on all sides due to the manysided results of the Ignorance that characterises his life. That is why he finds himself inadequate on many occasions when he has to deal with unusual situations. But it is possible for him to link himself with a higher Force and assure an ingress of strength by some master movement in which he rises above his normal self, such as a prayer articulating which he surrenders himself to and invokes the Higher Power which vivifies the entire energy or a heroic act or a powerful idea that
seizes the whole being. By all these, he transcends himself and opens to the action of a transcendent Force.

POWER

_The Power that acts in us is not our force._

(VII.6)

We are normally aware of some power that is active in us, effectuating our will, carrying out our wishes. We are prone to take it as the power of our body or life or mind. There is also a power that is incessantly active for our upward growth, elevating our movements, pushing up our consciousness. That too is taken to be a power of our enlightened selves. In truth, however, it is a Power of the Divine in manifestation, acting at different levels in different forms, as Power of Universal Nature—higher and lower—as Power in the individual—of soul and of nature. It is the self-power of the will at work in creation.

ASCENT

_Only the Eternal’s strength in us can dare_

_To attempt the immense adventure of that climb_

_And the sacrifice of all we cherish here._

(II.12)

It is well-nigh impossible to scale the heights of our being drawing upon our own puny human
resources. Our nature is limited in its ignorance and we find ourselves unable to undergo the various modifications and transmutations of consciousness that are demanded of us if we would ascend to and live on newer and newer altitudes of our being. We are attached to innumerable common objects and movements in our lower nature and it is difficult to overpass them unaided by a divine help. To withstand the pull of our lower and obscure nature, to raise our consciousness higher and higher in newer dimensions of existence calls for a strength beyond our human limits—the strength of the Divine vouchsafed by Grace.

ASANA

Intense, one-pointed, monumental, lone
Patient he sat like an incarnate hope
Motionless on a pedestal of prayer.

(III.3)

In the sadhana of meditation or concentration, the asana, posture has a prime importance. The body is seated erect, unmoving, the vision focussed on the object and the mind gathered in aspiration around the chosen theme or form. There is no restlessness in any part of the being, no impatience of any kind; one is collected, silent and alone with oneself.
FIRM POISE

a firm spiritual poise,
A constant lodging in the Eternal’s realms,
A safety in the Silence and the Ray,
A settlement in the immutable.

(I.3)

This is the permanent state to be built up by the spiritual seeker. While continuing his external activities in the position assigned to him and in the manner demanded of him, he strives to station, to fix his consciousness in an unshakeable poise. He detaches his vision from the flow of time and fixes it in the Eternal, the Permanent. He does not get all lost in the movements of expression, but holds himself in main in the Silence behind. His being always exposed to the light of the Sun of Truth, whatever the vicissitudes of shades and cloudings on the surface exterior, is not helplessly driven into the incessant movements of nature; it is stationed in the immutable status of the self.

ERECT

Abrupt, erect and strong, calm like a hill.

(VII.2)

This is the posture of the body, asana, when it is most receptive to yogic action, whether it proceeds from below upwards or from above downwards. The body is held erect, the chest, the neck, and the head in a straight line:
Placing the body in a straight posture, holding the chest, throat and head erect. . . . *

The body is informed with a strong life-force; it does not shake and spill what it receives.

The mind and the heart are calm, unmoved, not overcome by emotion or excitement.

This is the ideal state for yogic practice.

CALM (1)

The calm that broods in the deep Infinite.

(X.3)

Behind all activity, all movement that goes on incessantly in the universe, there is a Calm. This Calm bases and upholds the action that takes place on its bosom. It is not an inert and a dead calm; on the other hand it is intensely conscious and gathered in its being, dwelling upon itself, centred on the truth within. It is a dynamic Calm that exists powerfully in the profundities of the Infinite. The seeker becomes aware of this imperturbable Calm as he indraws his consciousness from the outer objects and activities. It is felt deep within his being or above. He learns to take his poise in

* triruddhatam sthāpya somaṃ sarirum (Svetasvatara Upanishad 2-8)
this. Calm and carry on his life-activity from there. Further he makes it his solid base for the ascent to the heights of his spiritual being. Whether he moves upward in consciousness or he opens his being and receives the descent of the higher spiritual Verities, this base in Calm is indispensable.

CALM (2)

Calm is self's victory overcoming fate.

(VI.2)

As long as man is involved and lost in the turbulent movements of life, he is a slave to circumstances, a creature of the workings of fate. If, however, he takes steps to disengage himself from this flow of life-current in its eddies and whirls and attains to a station in the immutable Calm that stands behind all this movement, he is freed from subservience to fate. For this Calm is the poise of the self free from subjection to outer nature and the rigid laws that govern its movements—material fate.

ALONE

The soul that can live alone with itself meets God.

(VI.2)

He who seeks to arrive at the gates of God must needs first disencumber himself of all else that holds
his attention and pulls him back. He must learn to devote himself exclusively to the pursuit of his objective and this entails his progressive disengagement from other involvements, physical, vital, mental that are inevitable in the life of ignorance in the world. He withdraws from the preoccupations of his desire-self and the elements that pander to it. He cultivates the company of his own deeper self. He depends no longer on external objects for the satisfaction of his wants and seekings. In time he finds fulfilment and felicity in the solitude of his soul where he can commune with his sole Ideal—God. Steady, undistracted communion deepens into identity. Verily,

In the Self is his delight, at play in the Self, doing works,—the best is he among the knowers of the Eternal.

(Mundaka Upanishad, 3.1.4)

OPEN GOD’S DOOR

Open God’s door, enter into his trance.
Cast Thought from thee, that nimble ape of Light:
In his tremendous hush striking thy brain
His vast Truth wake within and know and see.

(VII.2)

The doors of our natural being are always open outwards. The door to the self, to the inner
chamber where dwells God, is shut. He who seeks to realise God must needs knock at this inner door, open it by the intensity of his aspiration and enter through it in the gathered consciousness within. He must withdraw his mind from its customary thought-activity which at its best simulates the light of knowledge but is never its body. When thought is vacated, there is a silence: a hush falls on the brain and the Truth of God manifests. He must allow this Truth—unbounded in its range—to grow in him, know it by identity and see it with his awakened inner eye.

SEER

_Out of our thoughts we must leap to sight._

(II.11)

The mind cannot arrive at the Reality and obtain its knowledge by means of thought alone. Thought-activity proper prepares the mind, eliminates error and opens fresh horizons of idea-truths but it cannot go further. Thought has to yield to vision, the thinker must be replaced by the seer. It is only when the consciousness releases itself from the recurring rounds of thoughts, which cannot rise above their level, and awakens its faculty of direct sight, that the Truth or truths reveal themselves to it. The mind gets illumined with Knowledge; it does not have to think it out.

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SILENCE (1)

*Silence, the mystic birthplace of the soul.*

(II.13)

Not in the turbulent waves of the passions of the vital, not in the effervescent feelings and sentimentalities of the emotive parts, not in the restless Thinking of the mind, is our true soul to be found. This soul lies deeper, behind and away from the noisy movements of the desire-self. It lies in the secrecies of the heart pervaded by a solid silence. We have to withdraw ourselves from the outer mart of hectic movements and noise and enter into the profundits of this Silence within ourselves before we can become aware of the source of our being, the soul.

SILENCE (II)

*In silence seek God’s meaning in thy depths.*

(VII.2)

It is in our depths, in the calm and silence of the chambers of the soul that we can become conscious of the true purpose of our life, the aim of our soul in its present embodiment. Each soul is charged with a specific mission by the creator and it seeks different experiences in different embodiments in fulfilment of this Direction. If we become conscious of this purpose and collaborate in our nature with this demand in the soul, we expedite our evolution,
smoothen the course to the goal. In silence is this Knowledge revealed.

SILENCE (III)

_In absolute silence sleeps an absolute Power._

(III.2)

It is not enough to know what is the main purpose of our life and which is the path that leads to effectuate that purpose. We must have the strength of will to launch on the adventure, the power to negotiate our way across the innumerable obstacles and blocks erected by Nature who would have us remain subjects of her rule of Ignorance. Our human power is totally inadequate to meet the situation. It is only the Power of God, of a divine supernature, that can break through all the obstructions. And this Power lies dormant in the heart of silence. There is it to be reached and awakened into action.

SILENCE (IV)

_In the mind's silence the Transcendent acts_  
_And the hushed heart hears the unuttered Word._

(III.2)

This silence is to be found in the inner layers of the mind where the throb of thought-activity is
absent. There is a natural silence in the depths of the mental being and it is from there that the Power or Consciousness that reigns above the mind acts when it is invoked. Similarly there is a silence in the profund of the heart behind its movements of desires and emotions. In that silence is heard the potent Word of Power that sets the whole being astir with superhuman vibrations. To open to this Power we must ascend into the silence in the mind or retire into the silence of the heart.

LOOK WITHIN

*Always we bear in us a magic key*

*Concealed in life's hermetic envelope.*

(I.4)

For the many problems that face us in life, we tend to look outside for possible solutions. These apparent solutions when found and tried turn out to be half-measures or no measures at all. That is so because the real key to the solution of the problems that confront us is within ourselves, not without. It lies with our soul hidden in the core of our being. The soul is one with the truth of things and it radiates a self-knowledge, a self-light that illuminates every situation and offers the right solution. We must learn to approach each problem from the standpoint of the soul and resolve it with the light and consciousness emanating from it.
KEY

*Hid in ourselves the key of perfect change.*

(II.10)

Men are apt to rely on external to bring about the desired changes in their trouble-riddled life. They resort to imposition of codes, conformity to scriptural commandments, formulation of ameliorative systems, but find in the end that they can touch only the superficial layers of existence. The real key to the problems of life lies within. For the problems of existence, individual and collective, are ultimately based upon ego and division and they can be solved only by love, harmony and unity—all of which are powers of the soul. The soul holds the key. We need to awaken to this truth of the soul in our depths, open to its influence and bring it forward to govern our lives. This alone can bring about a real and lasting change.

HIDDEN POWERS

*slumbering in a sealed and secret cave
The powers that sleep unused in man within.*

(I.3)

The powers of mind, life and body which man wields are only a fragment of the powers Nature endows him with. Most of them lie untapped behind the surfaces of his being in the subliminal depths. Unknown to him, unused by him, they lie dormant
in their secretions. They are the hidden powers of the physical being—of suppleness, endurance, strength; power of the life-being—of inexhaustible energy, longevity, self-renewal; powers of the mental being—of intuition, inspiration, revelation and more. All of these can be awakened and activated in our life by the processes of yoga deepening and extending our areas of awareness.

**CELESTIAL POWERS**

*Hidden deep in man celestial powers can dwell.*

(I.3)

The powers that have been cultivated by man and active in him are usually those that serve the purpose of his limited life in ignorance. But they are not the final word. Deeper in his being there are other powers that can open up higher ranges of being to his awareness, powers that derive from the soul and can link him to his Divine Source. They are the godly powers of Love, Harmony, Light, unflawed strength. It is part of yoga to awake to these powers in oneself and set them functioning in life so as to uplift and transmute it in its higher and nobler terms.
WISDOM AND POWER

Wisdom on the dim Power's hooded work
Who builds in ignorance the steps of Light.

(I.5)

It is only as long as we are conscious only on the surface of our being and look at the exterior of things in the universe that we see a Prakriti, a mechanical Force at work in Nature, apparently repeating the same old rounds of movement. But as we become aware of the deeper levels of existence, we perceive that there is an Intelligence, a Wisdom guiding that Force and hewing a path of Light in the midst of all the obscurities of Ignorance. There is a Wisdom behind and above all the workings of Nature.

Wisdom is the Eye of the world.

(Aitareya Up. 3.3)

SENSES (I)

Our sight and sense are a fallible gaze and touch
And only the spirit's vision is wholly true.

(VII.5)

Our senses do not always bring correct reports of objects which they contact. "The senses are liars". (The Mother). They are mostly motivated by the desire-mind and bring in interested messages. The eye is apt to see what the mind wishes to see; so too
the other faculties cheat according to the half-conscious or sub-conscious inclinations. The only true vision is of the soul, the spirit that is unfortunately veiled by the activity of these senses. This veil must be removed and the inner spirit helped to project its sight undeflected so that we perceive and contact truths and not simulacrums of truths.

**SENSES (II)**

_The senses there were outlets of the soul._

(III.3)

Normally, in the life dominated by the lower nature the senses dominate and cover the breath of the soul with the smoke of errors and half-truths. The soul is choked and retires into its seccrecies. When, however, as part of the yogic discipline, the senses are brought under control and harnessed to the higher will, they turn into channels of the movements of the soul. They go into action only at the bidding of the soul, its impulses through the inner consciousness, and function as its instruments for experience, for radiation.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

_Thy acts are thy helpers, or events are signs,_
_Waking and sleep are opportunities_
_Given to thee by an immortal Power._

(VI.1)
To one who is awake and perceives the Divine workings in the world, everything in life has a meaning, a special significance in the context of his own evolution Godwards. Whatever be the works assigned to him they become pointed helpers in his growth; their nature has a relevance to his inner needs. The circumstances and happenings around him are signals he has to take note of. Whether he is awake or asleep, both the states are intended and utilised by nature to speed up his growth and assimilation. There is throughout a Higher Power of God overseeing his life, providing opportunities to progress, reaching help to utilise them to the best advantage.

BODY

*Even the body shall remember God.*

(XI.1)

Not only the soul, nor the mind, nor the life-force, but the physical body too shall share in the realisation of the Divine Consciousness. For the material body is as much divine in its origin and essence as the other members of the being. And in the process of self-discovery and self-knowledge, this body must be trained to awake and become aware of the divine Consciousness that is throbbing in its cells and gradually it recovers its divinity.
CELLS

In our body’s cells there sits a hidden Power
That sees the unseen and plans eternity.

(II.5)

The cells of our physical body are not just formations of material atoms. In each cell lies a secret Power, a self-concentration of Consciousness. And this Power is wide awake,* aware of the Reality of which it is an emanation; it keeps an active memory of the mission with which it is charged—to develop and manifest the divine Consciousness. It is this Power that urges the being to evolve.

DESTINY

Man’s hopes and longings build the journeying wheels
That bear the body of his destiny
And lead his blind will towards an unknown goal.

(VII.1)

Destiny is not something that is imposed upon us by an extraneous agency, a fate to which we must submit. In truth it is a result of our own doings, feelings and thinkings. We ourselves determine and shape, by our movements, the direction in which our lives tend, the goal towards which we go. Our aspirations, desires and exertions create grooves in

* esa supitesu jagarti (Katha Up. 3.8)
which our energies flow and form the paths on which we are carried by the momentum of our own actions. We thus decree our own fate.

This is particularly seen in spiritual life where destinies are not mixed up as in the worldly life. Each individual gets a clear field in which he can perceive how his own tendencies and movements forge their immediate reactions and make or mar his future.

SUNLIT PATH

Yes, there are happy ways near to God’s sun;
But few are they who tread the sunlit path;
Only the pure in soul can walk in light.

(VI.2)

Difficult is the path to God, say the sages; sharp like a razor’s edge, declares the Upanishad. Countless are the legends of the difficulties experienced by seekers in the Quest. But these are ways in which one depends upon one’s own effort, largely or wholly. There is a path in which one lays the entire burden on the Divine, surrenders oneself in all sincerity and amplitude to the Higher Power; this is the sunlit path where one is led with a happy heart. There may be, and indeed there are, difficulties posed by the recalcitrant elements in one’s nature or by adverse factors without; but they are
met with faith and confidence, for the strength that
surmounts them is not one’s own but the Divine’s.

Not all, however, can tread this happy path. Only those who are completely sincere, purified of
egoism and desire of any kind, surrendered in full
faith and trust to the Divine can walk secure in the
light that shines upon the path.

REST NOT

*Content abide not with one conqueredrealm.*

(VII.6)

As one advances in yoga one comes upon
several realms of the Spirit, domains of Conscious-
ness, revealing themselves one after the other. As
each range of being is experienced and embodied,
another opens calling for a similar cultivation. One
who aspires to scale the summits or plumb into the
depths, cannot stop at one level of experience, how-
ever satisfying it may be. Every step leads to the
next and the journey goes on. The Path stretches
endlessly into the infinitudes of the Spirit, stations
on the way are statues.
III

DIFFICULTIES
IMPERMANENT JOY

joy cannot endure till the end.
There is a darkness in terrestrial things
That will not suffer long too glad a note.

(I.2)

In his present state of ignorance, man is unable
to live in uninterrupted joy and light. For though
his consciousness is awake and exerts its will to
actualise its potential states of felicity and know-
ledge, there are parts that do not collaborate in this
positive effort. There are elements that are still
embedded in obscurity and unconsciousness and
they exert a continuous downward gravitational
pull with the result that joy, light and strength are
liable to be often vitiated by their opposites of
grief, darkness and weakness. Every positive upward
movement is countered by a negative, downward
one. Till the whole being is lifted above the belt of
the lower nature subject to ignorance and the hold
of nescience, till the consciousness is entirely purged
of these nether elements, joy cannot endure, light
cannot radiate without a break.

PEACE

The restless nether members tire of peace,
A nostalgia of old little works and joys,
A need to call back small familiar selves,
To tread the accustomed and inferior way.

(I.3)
The unregenerate parts of our nature cannot hold the action of peace for long in yoga. They tend to fall back on their old, accustomed movements and excitements and soon the ingrained habits of the old nature assert themselves. A herculean effort is needed to coax them and educate them into participating in the onsetting movement.

**SUBCONSCIOUS PULL**

*An old pull of subconscious cords renews; It draws the unwilling spirit from the heights.*

(I.3)

There is in us a large belt below the conscious levels of our being where all that happens, all that we think, feel and do, registers itself in the form of impressions which get deposited in these obscurer layers of the being. These impressions form themselves into tendencies which persist and exert their constant pull upon the more conscious parts. Even when the mind knows and rejects a movement as unwholesome, this pull from the sub-conscious or unconscious regions of the being drags the consciousness towards the old habits and there is a struggle.
IMPERFECTION

An imperfection dogs our highest strength; Portions and reflections are our share.

(II.2)

Things with us are imperfect because we ourselves are imperfect in our consciousness, incomplete in our being. We are evolving beings who have just emerged from the lower belt of obscurity and nescience and have still to find our feet; we have still only a semi-awake awareness of ourselves and things around. This constitutional limitation, with the divisive role of the ego added to it, acts as a drag on our growth; it pulls us down and constricts us within individual ego-walls. The most that we can develop is still something incomplete. We can, in our reigning state of ignorance and limitation, acquire fragments or reflections but not the full body of knowledge, power or bliss. To be able to arrive at them and embody them in ourselves, we need to exceed the boundaries of our ego-selves, transcend the limitations of ignorance and in conscience.

SLOW ADVANCE

Only a slow advance the earth can bear.

(II.10)

The earth-nature is tied fast to its roots, especially at its most material levels where inertia,
rigidity and obscurity are concentrated. Its movement in evolution is necessarily slow compared with that of the mental or vital elements. A forced pace only upsets the balance and holds up the advance. The material nature has to be educated and persuaded to yield to change, to increase the speed of its advance in keeping with the general movement.

CHANGE

_Hard is it to persuade earth-nature's change._

(I.1)

Yoga means a change in the consciousness, and an integral yoga aims at an integral change i.e., a change of the consciousness and the nature of the whole being. While it is comparatively easier to change the mental and the vital parts of the being, it is found extremely difficult to change the earth-part, the physical. This nature is weighed down by its subconscious and inconscient which resist all change and it needs much patience and effort to make a dent into its inertia and obstinacy.
DISTURBING SOMEWHAT

In a man a dim disturbing somewhat lives
It knows but turns away from divine Light
Preferring the dark ignorance of the fall.
(IV.2)

There is a part in man—more or less obscure and hidden—which is attached to its petty life of desire, ego and ignorant pleasure. Each time he attempts a forward movement towards a larger and higher existence, it becomes nervous, fearful lest its own habitual mode of living be disturbed. It is conscious of the truth and the eventual necessity of this step towards self-exceeding, but tries to turn away from that prospect as long as it can. It prefers to wallow in its obscurity and sticks to its earthly movements.

INCONSCIENT

The Dragon of the dark foundations keeps.
Unalterable the law of Chance and Death.
(III.4)

Our thoughts may be governed by our reason, our feelings by our enlightened emotions, our acts by our mental will, and yet we may be—and often are—overtaken by surprise by the events of life. Things seem to happen haphazardly, without rhyme or reason, upsetting all our calculations. Many of the positive movements built up carefully
by disciplines of mind and body are suddenly undermined and we find ourselves overpowered by their opposites. That is because below the surfaces of our being are the bases of the sub-conscience and the in-conscience, and they are always active, exerting their downward pull, upsurging whenever we are less vigilant and claiming our being again and again for their native rule. They seek to keep alive their law of nescience and death as long as they can.

FRAGMENTS

*Above us dwells a superconscient god*
*Hidden in the mystery of his own light:*
*Around us is a vast of ignorance*
*Lit by the uncertain ray of human mind,*
*Below us sleeps the inconscient dark and mute.*

(VII.2)

We know so little of our being that we are aware of only a fragment of our life. Above our conscious existence are regions of superconscience which are normally a closed book to us. Our thoughts and perceptions rarely touch it. Around is the vast cosmic existence ridden with divisive ignorance; all the tentative attempts of our mind to scrutinise its structure succeed only in throwing some light on its surfaces. Below us is the dark belt of the unconscious, the inconscient, obscure, dark
and dumb defying our efforts to plumb into its depths.

**INCONSCIENT**

the Inconscient too is infinite;
The more its abysses we insist to sound,
The more it stretches, stretches endlessly.

(III.3)

It is not the Superconscient alone that is infinite. The Inconscient too is infinite. This substratum of our consciousness below its levels of semi-awareness and un-awareness is almost un-plumbable. The more we probe into its depths, the farther do they stretch into deeper degrees of nescience. The human faculties are not enough; it is only the Truth-Light that can penetrate and reach its bottom which however opens on the other side into a Superconscience which has always been there.

**SOUL THE MASTER**

*Here Matter seems to mould the body's life*  
*And the soul follows where its nature drives:*  
*Nature and Fate compel his free-will's choice*  
*But greater spirits this balance can reverse*  
*And make the soul the artist of its fate.*  

(VII.1)
In the common life of the world it is the laws of Matter that largely rule the life of the body; the birth, growth and decay of the physical body and the life and mind embodied therein are primarily governed by the processes of Matter. The soul, in so far as it manages to reach the surface, is generally seen to move along the grooves etched by nature. There does not seem to be any free-will at all. The will is subjected to the compulsions of fate and drive of nature.

But this is not the full truth, not the ultimate truth. It is only a phase, an early round in the evolving process of the soul. A developed soul, a strong will can always change this balance in the working of nature. The soul can assert its rightful freedom and compel nature to follow its choice, create fate in the mould it chooses.

RESISTANCE

In the texture of our bound humanity
He felt the stark resistance huge and dumb
Of our inconscient and unseeing base;
The stubborn mute rejection in Life’s depths,
The ignorant No in the origin of things.

(III.3)

Even when, in the course of yoga, we surmount the obstructions of mental habits, reject the gross
impurities of vital desires of ego-movements and train the physical consciousness to respond to the demands made upon it, still we come across a dour resistance in our nature. There is something that obstinately clings to its own blind obscurity. At a certain level of the being this resistance is all-pervading. It is the inertia and the inconscience of our material base stubbornly opposing every attempt to impose consciousness and change upon them. They try to defeat every effort to disturb this poise and tend to swallow up all progress made in the more conscious parts of the being.

ENDLESS LABOUR

_all we have done is ever still to do,
_all breaks and all renews and is the same._

(III.4)

In the process of changing our nature as part of yoga, we constantly find that things worked upon and taken as completed often show themselves again in their old forms, old movements. We need to start once more all over again. Even if habits are broken, they rise again in unexpected ways and we feel the labour lost. This phenomenon is due to the large belt of the sub-conscient and the unconscious in us which retains the seeds of movements which may have been rejected from the conscious
parts of our being. The action of rejection and purification has to be reached to these nether cellars of our being and the pressure exercised relentlessly till the whole area is cleansed.

**FIXED NATURE**

_recurrent habits mimicked permanence._

(VII.2)

It is wrongly imagined that the nature once fixed cannot be changed. Actually there is nothing fixed about the nature. It gets into the habit of repeating certain movements, certain reactions and this recurrent activity gives the illusion of permanence. It is possible, by exercise of will, to change such habitual movements and replace them by others. After an initial resistance they yield and new movements take their place. It is thus possible to change one’s nature.

**OUR PAST (I)**

*Our past lives still in our unconscious selves
And by the weight of its hidden influences
Is shaped our future’s self-discovery.*

(VII.2)

The past is never wholly dead. Even when we forget it, something of it that is registered in the
less conscious parts of ourselves goes on acting. Its influences, its velleities and impressions persist and play a part—though behind the veil—in determining our present attitudes and choices which in turn shape our future. Every thought, every movement, every act leaves its impressions and helps to create definite grooves in which the subsequent life-currents turn. What was once, is there even now in its legacy and it will continue as an influence in the future to come.

OUR PAST (II)

Nothing is wholly dead that once had lived.
In dim tunnels of the world's being and in ours
The old rejected nature still survives.

(VII.2)

And this is so not merely in our individual selves. We live with others, we are part of the world and partake of its life. What has happened in the past survives as a force, a determinant in the life of the collectivity. There is what may be termed race-memory, race-impressions and they incline the present generation and posterity in particular directions. Even though the enlightened parts of the being—individual and collective—try to forge ahead on new bases, the past refuses to be obliterated, it survives and acts subtly in various
tendencies and forms. And we as participants in this collective destiny, come in for our share of the projection of the past.

SAMSKRASAS

A shadowy unity with a vanished past
Treasured in our old world-frame was lurking there,
Secret, unnoted by the illumined mind
And in subconscious whispers and in dream
Still murmured at the mind's and spirit's choice.
Its treacherous elements spread like slippery grains
Hoping the incoming Truth might stumble and fall.

(III.3)

Every movement of ours—a thought, a feeling, a speech, an act—registers itself in the stuff of our consciousness. Even when these movements terminate, they leave certain elements of their residue in us and this residual deposit forms a solid base from which the old and the past constantly surfaces and dilutes our efforts to new-form ourselves. This store of the past impressions and impulsions is hidden from our sight; it lies concealed in the obscure layers of our subconscious. These Samskaras, powerful tendencies from the past, come up in our less wakeful moments like dreams or conditions not sufficiently alert and pull our consciousness downwards towards themselves. They obstinately resist movements that are contrary to their
own trend and seek to sabotage them. They are like slippery grains on the floor causing stumbles and falls to the unwary.

**ESCAPE**

*Escape, however high, redeems not life.*

**(VI.2)**

It is easy enough in our struggle in life to withdraw and turn our backs on effort. This can be done at the material level as also at the spiritual. We may decide that life on earth has no meaning, no purpose and the only wise way out is to turn to a life beyond or to disappear into a no-life. But this course solves no problems. We have shirked our responsibility as awakened beings and denied our soul its legitimate opportunity for further growth. We have left life as it is, abandoning our responsibility to the collectivity from which we have amply drawn for our existence. Individual salvation into a blissful Brahman or an ineffable Nirvana in no way helps the earth-life which is struggling to evolve higher and higher forms to adequately express a God-state and God-Being. We have only betrayed Nature which has brought us up to the present stage of development in her evolving effort with the intention that as awakened self-conscious beings we would accelerate and lead her upward
movement forwards to its successful culmination in a divine Super-Nature.

BATTLE

A battle is joined between the true and false,
A pilgrim sets out for the divine Light.

(II.6)

Once man is awakened to his true destiny of finding the truth of his being, he cannot thereafter long rest content with the common round of life. He begins his quest for his Source in the Divine Reality and gradually converts his whole life into a purposeful journey to the Light Divine. And the moment he starts following this determination to move away from the shadow of Ignorance and Falsehood in the direction of Light and Truth, there ensues a struggle between the elements of falsehood that are alarmed at the prospect of losing a subject of their rule and the elements of truth that seek to gain ascendancy. This battle has both an individual and a general aspect. For in each person there is this mixture of truth and falsehood. There is also the same mixture—perhaps in a denser form—in the universe around. Thus there is a struggle both within and without.
INNER WAR

*This hidden foe lodged in the human breast
Man must overcome or miss his higher fate.
This is the inner war without escape.*

(VI.2)

The Adversary who is opposed to the Divine manifestation, to all Godward progress, is not merely in the universe outside man. He is within him too, acting through his agents e.g., ego, desire, ill-will etc. He is clever enough to conceal his presence and movements under spacious covers. But he must be searched for and spotted out in every corner of the being, every activity of nature, and relentlessly opposed and ejected. This struggle between the higher, Godward parts of man and the parts turned towards the lower elements of obscurity, ignorance and darkness is inevitable in the life of every awakened man. The battle has to be fought out and won with the help of the enlightened mind and will and the psychic being.

DISTRACTIONS

*Trivial amusements stimulate and waste
The energy given to him to grow and be.
His little hour is spent in little things.*

(II.5)

The life-span of man is not long. And of that period, says the Tantra, half is spent in 'sleep, a
quarter in growing up and in old age, with the result that he has hardly a fourth of his life to utilise for the high purpose for which he is born. But very few make the proper use of their life-opportunity. Instead of exerting himself to be what he should be—an awakened soul consciously evolving towards his Godhead—man fritters away his time and God-given energies in trifles, petty ego-satisfactions, fleeting amusements and generally wastes the precious opportunity given by human birth on earth—a birth that is most sought after by beings desirous of progress and perfection.

The seeker has to guard himself against this easier turn of nature, conserve his time and energies and put them to their highest use. Well does the Upanishad say:

*Until the morrow mortal man has these things, and they wear away all this keenness and glory of his senses; nay, all life is even for a little.*

(Katha Upanishad, 1.1.26)

**SYMPATHIES**

*Our sympathies become our torturers.*

(VI.1)

We sympathise with another when our consciousness identifies itself with his and feels its difficulties and seeks to help. This movement of
consciousness can be helpful to the other when it is enlightened and effective in knowledge. But when it is itself steeped in ignorance, it is truly ineffective. And for ourselves such a feeling of sympathy acts as a pain which we are obliged to suffer without any corresponding gain to the other person. Unless we raise the level of our consciousness, our sympathy cannot be fruitful; it only increases our lot of suffering in the life of ignorance.

FEAR

*fear hastening*

*Towards that of which it has most terror.*

(IX.1)

Fear creates an atmosphere that attracts the very thing that is feared. Thoughts of fear, feelings of fear, create anticipations of the object of fear and a kind of magnetic field is formed which emanates vibrations favourable to the entry of the things that one is afraid of. Besides, continued dwelling on that which is feared acts as an autosuggestion and the nature responds accordingly.

For the seeker fear is a denial of trust in the Divine and it must be firmly eschewed.
DISILLUSION

_Trivial or sombre, disillusion comes_
_Life’s harsh reality stares at the soul._

(X.2)

The superfices of life are glittering and man is held captive by the lure of their pleasures and prizes. But sooner or later, the glow wears away: circumstances develop, conditions arise in which life is exposed in the raw. Crudenesses of nature, skin-deep affections and the sharp edges of ego-centred existences rub hard. The harsh realities of life as it is, its imperfections of ignorance and falsehood, stare man in the face forcing him to have a second look at things and shed all illusions and complacencies. It is then that he is on the verge of a capital change.

DOUBT

_A million faces wears her knowledge here_
_And every face is turbaned with a doubt._

(II.10)

As long as we live in the obscure half-light of the ignorant mind, all knowledge that we arrive at is imperfect. There can be no finality about any conclusion. Truth seems to present herself in innumerable forms, plausibility each of which has a certain plausibility; and yet each carries its own shadow of uncertainty, of doubt. This precarious
nature of our mental knowledge pushes us forward to find another basis for knowing—a basis beyond the mind where spiritual knowledge begins to reveal itself in its growing infallibility.

ERROR

Error is the comrade of our mortal thought.

(VI.2)

Our thought is an operation of the mind which itself is an imperfect instrument of nature for arriving at the truth of things. The mind is a half-formed projection of the consciousness emerging from the lower and obscure belts of the subconscience and the inconscience and it is in the process of perfecting itself. Naturally in this stage of its growth it is never sure of the correctness of its workings and to that extent it is imperfect, prone to error. Till human thought releases itself from its nether bearings and develops into a perfect instrument of light and con-sciousness, the judgment of the mind is suspect and cannot be relied upon.

OUR VISION

Our mortal vision peers with ignorant eyes:
It has no gaze on the deep heart of things.

(X.3)
Our sight is limited by the bounds of the physical senses and is conditioned by the shadow of ignorance under which we normally live and move. It lights upon only the surfaces of things; it cannot probe deeper into their truth that lies behind the externals. In yoga we have to awaken the inner sight which is not thus limited, the sight that gazes straight into the heart of things.

FRAGMENTATION

A part-experience fragmented the Whole.

(II.14)

The Reality is integral and it needs an integral Consciousness to experience it unflawed. This, however, is not possible as long as we are subject to the workings of the mental reason which can function only by demarcating and segmenting the truth. The experience so gained gives us a partial knowledge which while it is true within its limits, falsifies the larger truth it leaves out. All mental experiences are mostly of this character; they fragment the Whole. Even when we total up these fragments, the soul escapes. It is only an enlarging consciousness that can hope to reflect the Reality as a Whole.
PRAGMATIC

Our dwarf will and cold pragmatic sense
Admit not the celestial visitants.
(II.11)

Our physical mind is apt to look at things mostly from a utilitarian standpoint: how far they serve our physical needs, our personal interests. Things are assessed and valued from this narrow angle. Our will for execution, for acquirement, is also correspondingly motivated. It is as narrow and limited as our down-to-earth sense. Both of them together act as deterrents to things of larger significance seeking to enter our being. Higher ideas, thoughts, intimations, emotions which do not fit into the scheme and requirements of our narrow mind and will are discouraged as visionary, impractical and shut out. Our being is thus denied the benefit of higher and larger movements and its growth is stunted.

SMALL

Our smallness saves us from the Infinite.
(VII.4)

Yoga means union with the Divine, the Infinite. But this union is impossible as long as we choose to limit ourselves to the walls of our egoistic existence which separates us from the Infinite. This self-limitation to the confines of our separative mind,
the ranges of our individual life and the bounds of our physical body, effectively prevents us from having communion with the larger existence around. It denies us the felicity of natural life.

*The small makes for unhappiness.*

(Chhandogya Upanishad 7.23.1)

It is an important part of yoga to extend our consciousness in the mind, life and body to embrace wider and wider stretches of the Infinite. We must constantly enlarge the scope of our thoughts, sympathies, actions and concerns.

**SPIRITUAL EGO**

*His spirit by spiritual ego sink.*

(VII.4)

Man is beset with ego at every level of his being. There is the physical ego which insists on referring everything to the claims and desires of the physical existence, the vital ego which seeks to dominate over other egos, the mental ego which insists on its own thoughts, ideas and choice. There is also a spiritual ego which preens on its superiority over others, the pride of piety, the sense of monopoly of truth. While the other egos are more or less self-evident and can be thinned out, the spiritual one conceals itself under specious disguises. It is the most inexcusable and the most dangerous;
most inexcusable because it directly contradicts spiritual consciousness, most dangerous because it cuts at the root of spiritual life under the cover of complacency.

SPIRITUAL PRIDE

the sin last, greatest, the spiritual pride...  
Its scorn of the worm writhing in the mud.

(XI.1)

All pride is inexcusable but spiritual pride is the worst of all. The egoism of one who treads the spiritual path and feels himself to be superior to all the beings, looks down upon those who are less fortunate than himself and are lost in the rounds of ignorant life, is most unspiritual, most foreign to a true spiritual consciousness. Such a complex may be understandable in the case of one who has no claims to spirituality and is governed by the self-regarding ego. But for one who seeks for the Divine, this falsehood of the notion of one's superiority and the inferiority of others is a contradiction, a sin against the very Truth of Oneness that is implicit in the Reality he quests for.
POISONOUS THOUGHTS

Crowding and stinging in a monstrous swarm
Pressed with a noxious hum into his mind
Thoughts that could poison Nature’s heavenliest
breath.
(II.7)

If there are thoughts that elevate and purify, there are also thoughts that taint and vitiate. These latter variety always come in battalions, one close upon the heels of another and occupy the mind before one has time to perceive and wake up. Thoughts of evil, falsehood and other negative kind poison the atmosphere—inner and outer—and pervert all movements. They sabotage Godward movements, question the aspiration and in all ways try to defeat the effort. They twist the thinking, afflict the feeling and sour the sap of life.

Such thoughts are not to be entertained even for scrutiny. They should be barred entry.

SAINTHOOD

. . . his soul dream shut in sainthood's brilliant cell
Where only a bright shadow of God can come.
(VII.4)

Sainthood is not spiritual perfection. The saint is a product of the evolution of an ethical consciousness, having a mental and emotional sense of oneness with his fellow-creatures. He is prone to be
shut up in this web of saintliness, feeling no need to go beyond or deeper to the soul within. His is not the spiritual consciousness, realisation of identity with the Divine. He basks in a reflection of the Glory of God in the skies of his sattvic mind and open heart.

The saint is at best a manifestation of the psychic consciousness. He has to evolve further into the spiritual, a diviner status.

EGO

*ego’s factories and marts*

*Surround the beautiful temple of the soul.*

(II.5)

The soul is a spark, a portion of the Divine and the centre of light in our being. Being divine in its nature, its qualities and powers are also divine. Beauty, harmony, love, joy and other verities of the Divine Truth are present wherever the soul is awake making the chamber of the soul a veritable temple. But we do not normally have access to this temple for around the soul there are formations of the ego, of the desire-self which erects its clumsy edifices of cravings, claims, deceits and falsehood shutting out the soul from sight. And these constructions are prolific, they go on plying their trade and convert our being into a smoky thoroughfare where every
passing desire, passion, ambition is welcomed, battered and multiplied.

DANGER (I)

The snake is there and the worm in the heart of the rose.

(X.2)

All that is attractive, charming and beautiful to look at is not wholesome. The pleasant need not always be good. Very often the pleasant turns out to be other than good.

One thing is the good and quite another thing is the pleasant, and both seize upon a man with different meanings. Of these whoso takes the good, it is well with him; he falls from the aim of life who chooses the pleasant.

(Katha Upanishad, 1.2.1.)

Danger hides itself in the least expected places, It is the cunning of the Adversary that he plants temptations in the most enticing situations. The seeker has to be wary of these ambushes on his way. The hostiles make a cover of what sounds delectable, what seems beautiful, what imposes as brilliant. Vala of the Veda, the foe who encloses, is luminous, gomatah.
DANGER (II)

A word, a moment's act can slay the god.

(X.2)

Human love is one of the most deceptive and disappointing idols that fails man ultimately. This love is different from divine love whose origin and purpose are quite different. Human love is vital and physical: it makes demands, it stakes a claim because it loves. It promises, and apparently yields, happiness as long as its conditions are fulfilled. But a single dissent, a slight hesitation in meeting its demands, raises a revolt and the love dies, leaving in its place anger and other base human movements.

Human love is only a simulacrum of the true love that is self-existent, that claims nothing except to give itself. True love is the flow of the divine Self towards itself in another form. Truly does the Upanishad say:

Verily, not for the love of the wife is a wife dear, but for love of the Self a wife is dear.

Verily, not for love of all is all dear, but for love of the Self all is dear.

(Brihadaranyaka Up. 4.5.6.)

DUALITY

A dire duality is our way to be.

(II.3)
At every step in life we are confronted with the choice between pain and pleasure, good and evil, truth and falsehood. If one of these contraries is accepted, the other is always there as its shadow or counterpart. And that is so because of our state of ignorance, division and limitation. It is because of these constrictions on our being that we are unable to experience life in its innate terms of pure delight, consciousness and existence. We respond and react in a particular manner, fragmentarily. Till we outgrow these limitations of nature in her primal rounds of evolution, we are prisoners of this duality of positives and negatives. It is only a liberated consciousness that can meet and take on all movements of life in the full impact of their truth, right and bliss.

SORROW

tired of sorrow's passionate luxury,
Grief's self became calm, dull-eyed, resolute.
(VII.1)

Sorrow grows on indulgence. The more we entertain sorrow, the more it gathers force and intensity and ultimately takes possession of the whole being. Some perverse streak in our nature even enjoys the sorrow and if, somehow, the cause for the sorrow is removed or tends to fade away, there
is actually a feeling of a regret in that part of the being, a feeling of emptiness which invites sorrow on some other account. A time does come, however, in the course of the soul’s development when the being withdraws its assent, refuses to participate in the agitation and passion of sorrow, and stands aloof, calm, indifferent. It decides not to entertain and indulge in grief any more; a new page is turned in the book of life.

SUFFERING

*Where ignorance is, there suffering too must come.*

(VI.2)

It is said that Delight, Ananda, is the warp and woof of Existence. And yet the lot of the common mortal is only pain and suffering. That is so because man is beset with a manysided ignorance, ignorance of his own truth and ignorance of the truth of others. He lives on the level of his desire-self separated from the true centre of his life—the soul. Also he shuts himself off from the rest who are ‘others’ to him, confined as he is to the self-limiting boundaries of his ego-self. The result of this double self-limitation arising from an ignorance based upon a fundamental Inconscience at the roots of our material existence, is an insufficiency in meeting the contacts of life. Instead of a whole-hearted,
natural response of joy, we return a cowering, constricted response of shrinking, fear, pain. When this cause, that is ignorance, is removed, suffering too shall be no more.

GRIEF

Every grief has joy hidden beneath its roots.

(II.6)

Grief is only a reaction and that too an unnatural reaction to the impacts of life. It is not a basic feature of existence. The individual life-force functioning under the limitations of the separative ignorance is unable to meet the waves of the universal life in a full and spontaneous embrace that would yield this innate delight; on the other hand it shrinks, it is unable to bear its intensity, with the result that it suffers shock, disappointment, grief. But in truth, that is only a superficial phenomenon. If the individual fronts the universal with a deeper and wide poise, the inherent delight comes through undeformed by the surface perversions of pain and suffering.

Joy and bliss are natural to the spirit embodied in life. Pain and suffering are deformations, perversions consequent on the limitation of the life-force and the constrictions of the active consciousness.
DOOM

What help is in provision to the driven?
Safe doors cry opening near, the doomed pass on.

(VI.1)

Unless man is conscious of himself and his movements, has acquired control enough to check, change or to terminate the workings of his energies, no advice, no intimation of possible or impending ill-turns are likely to be of real help to him. For he is helplessly goaded on by the drive of his own karmic forces, not to speak of the pressure of the environmental factors. He is so much involved in the movement leading him on to a destined end that even though opportunities for safety, for escape are provided, he does not notice them; he chooses to ignore them even if he is aware of them.

If man would avoid the course of doom, he must first disentangle himself from the coils of nature, prakriti, rise higher and partake of the freedom of his uninvolved soul, purusha.

PASSIONS

Passions that crumble to ashes while they blaze.

(II.5)

Passions have no place in yoga. They are movements of some kind or other of the vital being under
the domination of the ego. They are positive in their impulsions, but negative in their results. They consume the energies on which they feed and leave the being exhausted and dry when they are spent out. Whether they succeed in their aim of self-gratification or they fail, the effects they leave are weakening in the long run.

**REJECTION**

All that denies must be torn out and slain
And crushed the many longings for whose sake
We lose the One for whom our lives were made.

(III.2)

All that is contrary to one’s aspiration, all that is alien to the nature of the quest, all that questions and opposes the Ideal that one seeks to realise, must be mercilessly rooted out and eliminated from life. There are innumerable desires pressing for satisfaction, many objects that attract the attention and create a longing for them; man becomes an easy prey to their alluring call, gets distracted and loses himself in their pursuit. In so doing he completely forgets the real object of his existence, the search for the one Reality that gives meaning to his life and gets lost in the petty round of desires, fulfilments and disappointments. All these
inferior and misleading attractions must be firmly rejected by the aspirant for the Truth of existence.

Calm souls, having learned of immortality, seek not for permanence in the things of this world that pass and are not.

The rest childishly follow after desire and pleasure and walk into the snare of Death that gapes wide for them.

(Katha Upanishad, 2.1.2.)

ORDEAL

Our ordeal is the hidden spirit’s choice.

(VII.1)

The soul takes birth on earth—the appointed field of evolution—to gain experience and grow in its consciousness God-wards. The values in which it renders the experience need not be—and are usually not—the same as those of the surface being, the desire-soul. What is pleasant to the outer self may be unwelcome to the inner; and what is chosen as good, contributive to growth by the inner is usually treated as hard, unpleasant by the outer.

The good and the pleasant come to a man and the thoughtful mind turns all around them and distinguishes. The wise chooses out the good from the pleasant, but the dull soul chooses the pleasant rather than the getting of his good and its having.

(Katha Upanishad, 1.2.2.)
Thus it is that often the soul, the spirit within man, deliberately chooses difficult circumstances, struggle and labour, in order to gain rapid strength and progress in its evolution. It chooses the hard way in order to advance more quickly to its goal.

PAIN

*Pain is the hammer of the gods to break*  
*A dead resistance in the mortal’s heart,*  
*His slow inertia as of living stone.*

VI.2

There is a strong element of inertia and inconscience in man that opposes itself to every movement and effort towards growth of being, consciousness. This dour resistance is beaten down by the Force of evolution by the latter exerting pressure to the extent of causing pain. Only so does inert nature move, consent to change. Each time there is reluctance to advance, an obstruction to harmonise and progress, there comes this pressure of pain to force the pace and correct the situation.

HELL BEFORE HEAVEN

*None can reach heaven who has not passed through hell.*

(II.8)
The ignorance and obscurity of earthly Nature have a rhythm of their own and as long as one is content to fit into them, to live one's life in terms of their laws, there is no serious problem. But the moment one attempts to pass out of this inferior rhythm and grow into the freedom of the higher Nature, there is resistance—resistance not only from one's own parts rooted in the nether nature, but also from the universal nature. Every inch of ground is contested and one has to fight a hard, relentless battle against those elements and forces which do not want to allow anyone to escape from their dominion. That is why one who seeks the peace and bliss of heaven, has first to pay his debt to his primal origins in the inconscience and nescience—veritable hells; he has to inch his way out.

DESTRUCTION

In destruction felt creation's hasty pace,
Knew loss as the price of a celestial gain.

(II.8)

Destruction is not an end. In the aeonic labour of evolving Nature, there are stages and occasions when she hurries her pace and a seeming destruction takes place. But that destruction is not a meaningless waste. A good deal of ground is cleared: obstinate elements preventing the necessary advance
are done away with and scope provided for a fresh start. The loss is not entire either. Present loss is more than compensated by future gain. New gods cannot be born unless the old ones are dead.

This truth is doubly applicable in spiritual life where old things have to constantly yield to the new and where there is resistance, the Yoga-Force is seen to deal with the situation in a summary fashion. The advance of the soul cannot be stayed; whatever obstructs is destroyed sooner or later. It is a creative destruction.

**ADVERSITY**

*the strength extreme adversity brings
To lives that stand erect and front the world-powers.*

(VI.1)

Like most circumstances in this creation of the Divine, adversity too is permitted because it serves a purpose. Normally adversity is looked upon as a calamity and suffered in a resigned spirit, as a visitation of bad karma. But if it is faced bravely with determination and the best in oneself, it serves to bring out the latent resources and build up the inner strength. Adversity is not so much a personal circumstance as one of the conditions of this world in Ignorance and Darkness evolving towards Knowledge and Light. It whips up those who are still
half-awake and lethargic; it adds muscle to those who are trying to progress and develop. The greater the adversity, the greater the strength that is evoked and shaped in the process of meeting it. It brings out the full manhood. In the spiritual seeker, it calls out the power of the soul, puts him through the discipline of equanimity, calm endurance, rock-like faith and a deeper opening to the divine Strength.

SAVIOUR NAME

Pass slowly through that perilous space,
A prayer upon his lips and the great Name.

(II.7)

There are occasions in the course of our adventure of the spirit when we have to negotiate and get across difficult and dangerous passages. Our strength fails and our own resources dry up. At such moments, it is deep prayer to the Divine and the remembrance and utterance of the Name that invokes the Divine Power, that saves us. The prayer links us to the guiding Hand; the Name is itself a concentration of the power and consciousness of that to which it relates and hence the uttering of the Name brings the Higher Power into action and we are safely through.
DEFEAT (I)

The spirit rises mightier by defeat;
Its godlike wings grow wider with each fall
Its splendid failures sum to victory.

(VI.2)

Of a seeker who strives to realise the Divine, every movement in his life is contributive to the eventual result. Even his defeats add their mite. Each time there is a failure, an apparent defeat, the inner spirit girds itself up with a greater will, gathers more strength and makes a determined bid to make up for it. As a result, it achieves much more than is possible normally. Each fall acts as a spur, each step backward pushes him two steps forward.

DEFEAT (II)

In our defeated hearts God’s strength survives
And victory’s star still lights our desperate road.

(II.6)

As in common life, so in the spiritual, the going is not always smooth. There are ups and downs, conquests and defeats. At each defeat the mind tends to be discouraged and the vital depressed. It looks as if all is lost and it were best to throw up the sponge. But this is only a reaction on the surface being. Within us there is some part, some element that refuses to be so discouraged; it insists on stand-
ing up and facing the challenge. It summons its latent will and helps us to redouble our effort. This is the power of the soul, the strength of God, that lies untapped in our depths and surges forward in the hour of external crisis and urges us to endure and stick to our determination to advance on the path. One defeat does not close the chapter. It can only halt for a while, delay, but never stop the advance. The path stretches on and it is lighted up by a distant star of victory assuring success if only we would hold on, however trying the circumstances may be.

ADVERSARY

An adversary Force was born of old:
Invader of the life of mortal man,
It hides from him the straight immortal path.

(VI.2)

The Adversary is a cosmic fact. One becomes more aware of its existence as one grows more conscious. It is a result of a revolt against the Divine Will in manifestation and it operates everywhere to contradict, to oppose and, if possible, to defeat the Divine Purpose in the creation. It becomes articulate in the life of man as he grows in awareness. It is especially active in the case of spiritual seekers who aim to transcend the laws of nature in Ignorance. Its sole purpose is to prevent him from
realising his spiritual destiny; where prevention is not possible, it tries to delay. It confuses, it deceives, it takes him away from the straight natural Path to the Truth, *rtasya pantha*, and leads him into the many crooked ways of the

*devious attraction of sin*

(Isha Upanishad, 18)

**ANTAGONIST**

*Even Good she makes a hook to drag to hell.*

(II.8)

There is no limit to the trickeries of the hostile powers that are out to oppose man’s progress towards the Divine Truth. The deviations they spread out in front of man under specious pleas are legion. There is nothing they will not use for their purpose. Even movements that are good in themselves are seized by them and turned to ends quite different from those anticipated. They promote subtle egoism, pride of virtue and self-righteousness even in him who prefers the good to the bad and bring about his stagnation and downfall. Even the satisfaction that progress tends to create is used by them to create a complacency that makes him lose what he has gained. Verily, man has to be constantly vigilant to escape their insinuous attacks.
GUEST-ENEMIES

_Ourselves within us lethal forces nurse;
We make of our enemies our guests._

(IV.2)

In spiritual life we find that our enemies are not so much outside as inside ourselves. On a close look within we see that many of the elements that vitiate our upward effort, oppose our aspiration and purification, are derived from and sustained by our own movements of desire, egoism, insincerity lurking in our lower vital and the vital mind. Probing further, we find that they are there because something in us wants them, gives quarter to them, even when our more enlightened parts know that these are harmful. We give them room, we nourish them by indulgence and promote them by our insincerity.

MYSTERIOUS WORLD WITHIN

_A whole mysterious world is locked within._

(VII.2)

Man is not all that he appears to be. Behind his surface exterior, there are many parts of his being that act from behind the veil. Behind his outer body, life and mind are the subtle-physical body, inner life-being, inner mind,—the subliminal regions. In these inner realms of consciousness there are many forces—latent or active—whose influences
are unknown and unperceived. These hidden causes are really responsible for many of his movements expressing his feelings, speech, action that take man by surprise.

To be aware of this teeming world within and to acquire control over it more and more is the first important step in yoga.

DEMON

A force demoniac lurking in man's depths
That heaves suppressed by the heart's human law,
Awed by the calm and sovereign eyes of Thought,
Can in a fire and earthquake of the soul
Arise and, calling to its native night,
Overthrow the reason, occupy the life.

(II.7)

The animal in man, a legacy of his past in evolution, is very cunning. It survives all attempts by the enlightened will to smother it out. It slinks away into the secrecies of the subconscious and bides its time to get an opportunity for the revival of its activities. The law—moral and ethical—imposed by the heart only suppresses the movements of this beast; the overseeing and calm gaze of thought holds it in awe and controls it. But at the slightest opportunity, when the attention is diverted and the reins are slack, this suppressed demon of the unregenerate force can spring up, overturn the
poise of the being, cause a veritable earthquake of the soul and throw down reason from its seat; it can occupy the life and push man into indulging in its primitive movements.

Incessant vigilance is the only way to keep the demon at bay.

**TENEBROUS POWERS (I)**

*Man's house of life holds not the gods alone:*
*There are occult shadows, there are tenebrous Powers,*
*Inhabitants of life's ominous nether rooms,*
*A shadowy world's stupendous denizens.*

(VII.2)

The gods are said to dwell in man, presiding over their respective energies and faculties—all organised around the Deity seated at the centre of the nine-gated city. But there are not only the gods. There are also the adversaries, the darker forces and powers inhabiting the less-lit regions of his being. They particularly ensconce themselves in his sub-conscious and unconscious parts and carry on their nefarious activities from those nether levels and obscure corners. They are ever on the look out for suitable opportunities to surge up and gain possession of the house of man. They try incessantly to create such adverse conditions directly or indirectly,
TENEBOUS POWERS (II)

Enormous they invade his bodily house,
Can act in his acts, infest his thought and life.

(VII.2)

These powers and forces, inimical to the godward evolution of man, first project their influence from where they lie concealed. As their influence gains ground they come forward in their full form and function directly. They move his impulsions, make him act according to their will. They enter his mind and incline his thoughts in favour of their own evil designs. They get hold of his life-will and impel his life-energies towards the satisfaction of their own interests. Man thinks he acts and moves on his own, but in fact he is precipitated into thought, feeling and action by these invaders from the subterrainian layers.

TENEBOUS POWERS (III)

Not only rise in him perverse drifts of thought
And formidable formless influences,
But there come presences and awful shapes.

(VII.2)

The nether elements of darkness and falsehood do not merely cast their influence on man’s mind, heart and will and turn their movements into their mould. When the ground is prepared, they make themselves felt as presences which though formless
are nevertheless concretely experienced in various ways e.g., a feeling of heaviness around, a suffocating pressure, a cold and chill air etc. They also take frightening shapes and unnerve their victim. These forms may be of various combinations e.g., human-cum-animal or monstrous.

EVIL (I)

This evil Nature housed in human hearts
A foreign inhabitant, a dangerous guest:
The soul that harbours it it can dislodge,
Expel the householder, possess the house.

(VII.2)

The elements of insincerity, falsehood, evil, that lodge themselves in our sub-conscient and other obscure regions of the being are foreign to the nature of the soul. If they are allowed to continue and have their play, they become dangerous. They pervade the whole being with their activities and overpower the soul; they even displace the soul, casting it behind, and become the rulers. This is what has happened in those who seem to be entirely evil without even a relieving ray of goodness.

To guard against this danger, the seeker needs to be sincere to himself and the moment he becomes aware of these evil forces he must exert his will to reject them, throw them out of his system.
EVIL (II)

It imitates the Godhead it denies;
Puts on his figure and assume his face.

(VII.2)

This evil has many ways of extending its power, prolonging its rule. The entity working through this evil element in man’s nature puts on several disguises and misleads him. It speaks the language of the good, it even puts on the appearance of the guide or a divine being and confuses the seeker. Many are the instances when the adversary has appeared in the form of the Guru or the chosen Deity and misguided the aspirant.

If there is a central sincerity, however, something warns and one can recognize the deceit, especially from the after-effects of the experience.

ASTRAL CHAOS

He through the astral chaos shore a way
Mid the grey faces of its demon gods,
Questioned by whisper of its flickering ghosts,
Besieged by sorceries of its fluent force.

(II.5)

Many are the experiences of the supra-physical planes that one may visit voluntarily or be precipitated into involuntarily, in the course of the inner development. Above the subtle-physical world,
which is close and in a way an extension of the physical, there lie the regions of the lower vital where all is in an agitated flux. The beings that dwell in that world are indistinct of form, demoniac in their impulses; volatile and fluctuating in their moods and the forms reflecting those moods. They accost the traveller and whisper misleading suggestions to him, tempt him, confuse him. This life-world is a world of freer movements and subtler formations than the rigid material world and many are the figurations thrown up by the vital force regnant on this plane. They are full of deviations and turns that are dangerous. Only the remembrance on the saviour Name of the Divine is an anchor of safety.

VALLEY OF GLIMMER

*they enter the valley of the wandering Gleam
Whence, captive or victims of the specious Ray,
Souls trapped in that region never can escape.*

(VII.3)

The path of the traveller to the Spirit is full of dangers. There are disguises that mislead and trap the unwary. There is, particularly, a belt of the vital world that is full of glamour, false lights, convincing simulations where one is apt to be deluded into thinking that he has arrived, that he has ful-
filled his quest. This is known in the mystic path as the valley of the intermediate glimmer where seekers are arrested in their progress by forces and beings posturing as divine and led into deviations and spiritual suicide. These beings make capital use of whatever elements of desire, ego or ambition are lurking in the seeker and deflect him from the Right and the Truth.

LITTLE DEITIES

_In the mist of secrecy wrapping the world-scene_  
_The little deities of Time’s nether act_  
_Who work remote from Heaven’s controlling eye,_  
_Plotted unknown to the creatures whom they serve._

(II.5)

The material world that we see and feel is not the only world. There are subtler spaces enveloping the physical in which there are entities of various types. Some of them—nay many—are under the control of the Adversary and are ever on the move to retard, to upset and in all ways to interfere with the Godward evolution of beings on earth. They stay outside the rays of Truth and work in semi-darkness and obscurity in the furtherance of their nefarious designs. Men think they act on their own, but very often the impulses that move them are from these little beings and elementals, and men are pushed along in directions of which they are not aware.
OMINOUS BEINGS

Ominous beings passed him on the road
Whose very gaze was a calamity.
(II.7)

When one enters into the realms above the physical world in dream or in meditative sessions of the consciousness, one comes face to face with a different order of life. Not only is the whole landscape different in nature—less rigid, more supple and adaptable—but the denizens of these worlds are of strange form and movements. There are among them benevolent as well as malevolent beings. And of the latter, some are specially evil in intent and in appearance. Even a look from them casts a chill on us and initiates a train of disaster.

In our physical world also there are some who carry this force of evil and one cannot be too careful in avoiding them.

EXPOSURE TO HOSTILES

O soul, bare not thy kingdom to the foe;
Consent to hide thy royalty of bliss
Lest Time and Fate find out its avenues
And beat with thunderous knock upon thy gates.
(VII.6)

It is a salutary rule in spiritual life not to draw the attention of others to one’s inner experiences or the happy states of consciousness that are being
built up within. For the hostiles are always waiting in ambush and spare no means to strike and negative the gains. Not to speak aloud, not even to express joy to oneself over some inner achievement, is a wholesome rule. The hostiles and their agents take it as a challenge and set about undermining the position.

**VOICES**

_In vague tremendous passages of Doom_  
_He heard the goblin voice that guides to slay._

(II.8)

The seeker may have to traverse passages of darkness, turn dangerous corners in the course of his journey to the Truth. At such times he must depend for guidance on his inner psychic guidance or the Higher Power to which he has opened himself. He may hear voices that mislead, voices that have the hostile intention of precipitating the unwary traveller into disaster. He can never be too careful against their dulcet notes.

**FIEND**

_The fiend was visible, but cloaked in light;_  
_He seemed a helping angel from the skies:_  
_He armed untruth with Scripture and Law._

(II.7)
The cunning of the Adversary is unimaginable; He tries to mislead the seeker of the Divine in many ways. He appropriates the bodies of men and operates through them and though invisible to us he is concretely felt. At times he may put on even a luminous form to make the deception more sure, imitating a God or the spiritual Guide. He may appear as an angel come to help. To make falsehood acceptable he presents it under the specious cover of citations from the Scripture and Law; he uses the phraseology of the Sastra to confuse the mind and make untruth appear as an imperative.

It is only an awakened and an active psychic perception that is the unfailing guide in such situations.

SUBCONSCIENT

The Titan and the Fury and the Djinn
Lie bound in the sub-conscient’s cavern pit.

(VII.2)

In the regions below our conscious belt there are many potencies that are denied expression in our wakeful life. They are of all kinds—complexes of suppressed desires, formations of the lower nature, forces of the nether being—all waiting for opportunities to surge up and break into life. They may be small, irrational, mischievous in nature or intensely passionate, devastating and powerfully evil
in intent. They must be seen for what they are and thrown out of oneself with a vigilant will.

CROOKED FASHIONERS

Wherever love and light and largeness lack,
These crooked fashioners take up this task...
Our nature's twilight is their lurking place.

(II.5)

In the semi-conscious and the sub-conscious regions of our being there are elements of the lower and unredeemed nature that refuse to be changed, resist the action of light. They hide behind the veils of unconsciousness. They are the agents of the forces of darkness and inconscience. They are seized upon and made instruments for attacks by these enemies of Light and Truth. They get opportunities to launch their attacks whenever we indulge in movements favourable to their activities. When we hate rather than love, when we shelter in the shades and shadows of our ignorant unregenerate nature rather than open to the light of Knowledge, when we choose to confine ourselves within the little walls of our ego and desire rather than enlarge our consciousness and extend ourselves into the larger Universal existence, then do these crooked fashioners get the opportunity to start their nefarious activities.
FALL

This too the supreme Diplomat can use,
He makes our fall a means for greater rise.

(I.3)

The Eye of the creator is ever watchful. He utilises every circumstance, every movement towards the fulfilment of his purpose—both universally and individually. He turns difficulties into opportunities, defeats into occasions for gaining a richer experience, falls into greater spurts. Each fall forces one to reassess one’s resources and capabilities and make up the deficiencies before launching upon another more fruitful effort.

INNER DEATH

This is the tragedy of the inner death
When forfeited is the divine element
And only a mind or body lives to die.

(II.7)

The outer death, death of the physical body is only a process of change in the evolution of the soul. But the inner death, death of aspiration, of hope, of the will to progress, deadens the soul. The purpose of the embodiment—to progress in evolution—is defeated and only the outer shell of body and mind are left to wither away as soon as their karma is exhausted. Existence becomes meaningless.
HIDDEN DOORS

But once the hidden doors are flung apart
Then the veiled king steps out in Nature's front.

(VII.5)

The true ruler of our being sits deep within behind the several veils of ignorance and ego. These intervening barriers are experienced in yoga as so many doors to be opened by self-effort and the action of Grace. They are the portals which must be moved to part before the passage is free for the indwelling Divinity to come forward and assume direct charge of our surface being. Even when the doors are opened there is the persistent tendency of nature to close them again and again; constant vigilance, patience and effort are needed to keep the doors apart.

SAVING POWER

But there is a guardian power, there are Hands that save,
Calm eyes divine regard the human scene.

(VII.2)

Despite all the temptations and trials to which the seeker is subjected by the Adversary, there is no need to be discouraged or to despair. For there is always a protecting Grace. There are the Hands of God that support, guide, save. A look divine ever regards the scene of human effort, the obstructions
it has to surmount, the weaknesses it has to get over. This divine regard is not misled by appearances, by the temporary phenomena of the enemy gaining ground. It knows and radiates the divine Will and by its very look it sustains and helps the aspirant who looks up to it for succour.

DEATH (I)

*Our being must move eternally through Time;*
*Death helps us not, vain is the hope to cease.*

(II.6)

There is a before and there is an after. We are here on earth for a purpose. This purpose runs through our life and carries us across to other lives. And that is the evolution of our soul Godwards. Birth after birth, the soul embodies itself in suitable forms with the needed powers in order to gain experience, grow in stature and develop itself in the mould set for it by the divine Creator. This career cannot be ended by human caprice. Difficulties and stresses in life often create the temptation to escape from the soul’s labour. One may be tempted to cancel oneself from the cosmic lists by choosing the path of withdrawal or one may hope to find an easy solution in death—natural or unnatural. But it is a vain hope. Death solves nothing. The very circumstances and difficulties sought to be avoided
repeat themselves under the compulsion of the law of evolution in the next incarnation.

DEATH (II)

*Our death is made a passage to new worlds.*

(II.6)

Death is not the end. It may terminate the life-span of the physical body, but it does not affect the soul the evolving being that is man. The soul lives on. All that happens is that it sheds its old vesture and proceeds to take on a new one:

*The embodied soul casts away old and takes up new bodies as a man changes worn-out raiments for new.*

(Bhagavad Gita, 2.22)

The soul moves on through the gates of death. It leaves the physical world but it does not disappear from existence. There are other worlds overtopping the physical e.g. subtle-physical, vital, mental and so on and the disembodied soul travels thither on its way to its place of rest in the psychic world before it is ready for the next round of experience and growth. Thus death is a passage, not a terminus.

NIGHT (I)

*Night is a path to unknown dawns.*

(II.4)
Night in yoga is not an ending. The darkness of this night does not extinguish the soul. It is an interval between one period of advance and another. Human nature cannot keep pace with the rapid progress of the soul and goes on exerting a downward or backward pull. When this pull becomes too hard and nature needs to be allowed some reprieve to assimilate, gather strength for a fresh spurt, the soul retires within; there is a resultant fall in the intensity of the external consciousness, a dull and grey patch forms. But that is only a temporary phenomenon. As soon as the necessity of resting is over, the soul once again comes forward to renew its quest and there breaks the dawn opening upon a new and unknown future. Thus the night serves as a passage—however dim lit—from one Day of advance to the next.

**NIGHT (II)**

*God’s long nights are justified by dawn.*

(X.1)

Night, in the spiritual context, signifies a period of obscurity, clouding of consciousness due to any reason. It may be a thick shadow cast by the opposition of elements recalcitrant to change; it may be the time taken by nature to assimilate the gains made by the soul before it is ready for a further spell of progress; it may even be a siege by the
adversary; but whatever the nature of the stress and suffering, however long the duration of the nights, at the end they do give birth to the dawn—the dawn of light, the dawn of new consciousness. In God’s economy, even the nights serve a purpose—preparation behind the veil for a new birth to take place.
IV

PROCESS
CASUAL PHRASE

A casual passing phrase can change our life.

(IV.3)

God is ever on the look-out for openings to reclaim us, his creations, to the glories of his Spirit. He oversees from above, he watches from within and he waits for the right moment and opportunity to awaken us and set us on the Path to discover our own reality. In this process any happening, any movement, even any word—spoken or written—may provide the necessary impetus to rise as it were. Some word, some phrase—though not so intended by the speaker—may strike some chord, awaken some latent impulse and initiate an altogether new movement in our life.* In such cases God seizes the occasion of the word-impact to precipitate the change for which the moment has arrived.

MEANING

There is a meaning in each curve and line.

(VI.2)

For a seeker nothing in life is without significance. There is nothing that is useless, there is no

* The classic instance in modern times is of the impact of the word Arunachala (Name of the Hill) on the young boy Venkataramana who awoke to his destiny on hearing the name and blossomed into the great sage, Sri Ramana Maharshi.
chance as such. All is ordained for his best advancement. The Divine Providence arranges his life in such a way that every bit of it, even seeming misfortunes, 'accidents', are found to have a contribution to make in the long run. One must develop the sense to perceive this feature in all happenings, welcome or unwelcome. And the first condition for this to be possible is to detach oneself from the mechanical flow of day-to-day life and observe oneself and events with an uninvolved consciousness. With habit one begins to see the contours of the developing soul-movement outlining themselves and one dismisses nothing as of no importance.

**CHANCE**

*There is a meaning in each play of chance.*

(II.11)

When things happen in our lives outside our calculations and expectations, we are inclined to call it chance. In fact, there is no 'chance' in this creation which is a growing, purposeful manifestation of the Divine. There is however, a play of possibilities in this field of evolution. Certain possibles strive to gain over other possibles and the human intelligence anticipates particular results based upon its knowledge of the factors at work. But beyond the range of human ken there are more possibilities working for expression, new elements
go on entering into the situation and happenings take place other than the expected. Evidently these too have their causes, though they are not known before. What is dubbed as chance is only an un-grasped, but nevertheless a sequential, culmination.

FATE AND SOUL

*The soul in man is greater than his fate.*

(XI.1)

It is said, and rightly so, that we are ourselves the builders of our fate. We undergo the consequences of what we have done—now in this life or in past lives. This is true, however, only of the nature part of our being. It is our nature, the triple nature of mind, life and body, that normally acts and forges its *karma*. And when this *karma* fructifies, it is only that nature that is subject to it. The soul within is not involved in it; it is not a prisoner of fate though it may choose to allow its workings. It is above the actions and reactions that have created the fate. It has a will and a power that are superior to this fate because they derive from the Divine; and if that be the choice of the soul, this will and power can impose themselves upon the workings of the fate and change their direction and culmination.
SOUL (I)

The soul is the watchful builder of its fate.

(II.6)

Circumstances may appear to determine the destiny of man to a large extent. But that is only an appearance. Actually it is the soul within that elects its destiny and works to build it through successive embodiments. It chooses the circumstances that are most favourable for the fulfilment of its objectives—even when they seem to be the most unfavourable on the surface. In yoga one learns to become more and more conscious of the soul within and act in consonance with its choice so that the evolution is smoother and quicker.

SOUL (II)

Our souls are moved by powers behind the wall.

(II.5)

In yoga, as we become more and more conscious of our thoughts, feelings, vital movements and physical instincts, we begin to see that much of what we do is not determined by our own will or choice. There are unseen factors and pressures that move and precipitate us into courses of action that are not in our calculations. They are forces and beings in the environment, in the universal atmosphere, who seek to utilise our minds, our energies and our bodies for their own purposes. They may
be helpful for our growth, they may be harmful, but they are a fact and the seeker has to exercise a constant vigilance to guard himself from falling a prey to the designs of these adverse powers.

UNKNOWN

_A vast Unknown is round us and within._

(II.2)

We know only a fragment of ourselves and still less of the world around us. We know somewhat of the physical exercises of things but they are only appearances. Behind them and beyond them is a mystery. Similarly within ourselves we hardly know anything of what goes on behind our surface being. There are layers of consciousness, levels of being which need to be explored and they are a closed book to the mind. To open up these mysteries of existence and acquire control on their movements is one of the objectives of yoga.

FIELD

_The outward and the immediate are our field,_
_The dead past is our background and support._

(I.4)

The past is of no value except for the lesson it contains and the background of experience that it
provides. It is not something to be kept alive by dwelling upon it and prolonging its tenure into the present. The seeker keeps the essence of its experience in his consciousness and proceeds to utilise it to its utmost in the present that unfolds before him. He does not spend his time in day-dreaming of the future either. He takes the circumstances and opportunities in which he is placed as his assigned field for experience and growth and exerts himself accordingly. In this endeavour his past serves as a helpful background and guide to so utilise the present as to ensure a fulfilling future.

KARMA

_The gods make use of our forgotten deeds._

(VI.1)

We speak words, feel emotions, perform acts in the flux of life today and tend to forget them in the flux of tomorrow. But the guardians of the cosmic Law enter every move of ours in their logbook for according to this Law of action and reaction i.e. _karma_, every movement must produce its result in the fullness of time. A wise Providence makes the operation of this machinery in Nature serve the needs of the evolution of the soul. Past deeds fructify at the right moment, the hour when they can best contribute to the progress of the evolving being. Nothing is ever allowed to go waste.
PROGRESS

*Her greatest progress is a deepened need.*

(II.4)

It is only when there arises a keen and an urgent need in the being that there is an urge to act to fulfil that need. Man forges ahead to meet this inner demand. The deeper the need, the greater the effort and larger the advance. This new attainment in turn calls forth a new situation to adjust and assimilate, which in its turn gives rise to a still deeper need. Thus the cycle of progress goes on when one is alert and moves in response to the demands of the evolving spirit within.

UNIVERSE

*a living movement of the body of God.*

(I.3)

The universe is not a figment of Maya, a falsehood that is to be rejected and expelled from our pure self. It is, on the contrary, a mighty pulsation of the Breath of God, a heave of his own Body. He is not only its indwelling Spirit but also the substance of which it is formed.

*It is He who has gone abroad.*

(Isha Up. 8)
UNITY

Heart feels for heart, limb cries for answering limb, All strives to enforce the Unity all is.

(V.2)

As the consciousness is enlarged progressively and widened to embrace more and more of the universe, there is a spontaneous flow of the being towards other beings: the mind seeks and attains communion with other minds, the heart is drawn to other hearts and feels what they feel, each part seeks its counterpart. There is a gathering movement to effectuate in life the truth of unity that is realised in the depths of the being.

UNIQUE

Each in himself is sole by Nature’s law.

(VII.4)

Each person has his own stress in nature, his own truth to manifest. No one is totally like another. Each one has to become aware of this special destiny of his soul and work out its fulfilment on appropriate lines of evolution; svadharma is to be lived according to svabhava.

LAW OF PERFECTION

To seize the absolute in shapes that pass, To feel the eternal’s touch in time-made things, This is the law of all perfection here.

(II.2)
Perfection implies the development of the whole. The entire life is to be taken up and built in the mould of the chosen Ideal. No part or parts of it can be left out from the scheme. There are forms that live for a while and then either change or cease. The eye for truth, however, perceives that these forms are only self-castings of the absolute; the forms may pass, but that which they embody lasts. Similarly things that are subject to the mutations of time are not mere creations of time, they carry something of the Timeless in them and that element transcends time even while involved in the movement of time. Thus one sees the absolute, the eternal in everything in this world and shapes one's life around it.

WHISPER

Even in all that life and man have marred,
A whisper of divinity still is heard,
A breath is felt from the eternal spheres.

(X.2)

The ego and the desire of men in ignorance have interfered with the rhythms of Nature and brought in much perversity and confusion in the moments of life. Everything is thrown in a disorder and chaos. And yet all is not without hope. For the observant eye catches hints of developing harmonies, strains of new growths emerging from unseen heights.
The yogic Consciousness perceives these signs and experiences those subtle phenomena which escape the common intelligence.

TREAD OF THE GODS

Lo, how all shakes when the gods tread too near!
All moves, is in peril, anguished, torn, upheaved.

(X.4)

When the action of the higher, super-normal Powers starts taking place in yoga, the adhar, the being of man striving upwards, finds it difficult to adjust itself to their powerful rhythms. Apart from the inability of the lower nature to keep pace, there is the agitation of the ego-elements which are threatened in their security of tenure; they cower in fear, spread alarm. There are disturbances, disharmonies, tensions. The seeker has to learn to watch himself, impose his central will upon all his members and hold himself open in an act of surrender to the higher action.

SPEECH

The speech that labels more than it lights.

(I.4)

As one exceeds the bounds of the finite, one sees how poor are human thought and speech to
grasp and express the truths that constantly escape their hold. Words serve merely to indicate, not to bring to the understanding the contents of the objects they relate to. One realises how in such conditions, silence is much more potent for communication.

THOUGHT

Our precarious mortal thought
That looks from soil to sky and sky to soil
But knows not the below nor the beyond.

(II.10)

Our human thought is severely limited in its range. It scans the surfaces of the physical existence; it reaches out to the limits of the reasoning and logical intelligence; but it can do no more. There are depths below the sensible physical exteriors, the levels of the subconscient, unconscious and the inconscient where our thought has no entry. There are heights of being above the mental body which thought fails to reach when it tries to ascend them. A power greater than the thinking faculty must be awakened in our consciousness to become aware of and to know the contents of these hidden levels of our being.
Sin

Sin poisons with its vivid flowers of joy
Or leaves a real scar burnt across the soul.
(VI.2)

Sin is a movement of perversity, of deflection of the consciousness from truth. Whether in thought, feeling or action, one chooses wilfully a course that is not only not in keeping with the right and true movement of the soul, but contrary and harmful to its natural growth. Such a deviation yields pleasurable results to the lower nature in ignorance and corrupts the whole being. It tends to form a groove for the repetition of similar movements and if persisted in, leaves a mark on the mould of the soul.

In yoga one realises that sin is a wrong placement of consciousness. It calls for constant vigilance and correction.

SEPARATIVITY

The separate self must melt or be reborn
Into a Truth beyond the mind's appeal.
(III.1)

We are normally centred in our outer self, constituted of ego and desire, and feel ourselves separate from other similar selves. We live divided from all within our small separative walls. For our consciousness to expand and grow it is indispensable
that this separate self of ours should thin and dissolve into the larger self in the universe or the deeper and truer Self within ourselves—the Self which is always one with the Self of others. Our small, individual self must either melt or grow into the nature and dimensions of the greater and truer Self which is outside the grasp of our reasoning mind which can know and hold only limited formations.

DESIRE

He tore desire up from its bleeding roots
And offered to the gods the vacant place.

(III.3)

It is not enough to eliminate desire from our mind. Though removed from the conscious levels of the being, it goes under and hides in the more obstinate and hidden depths of the sub-conscious and still deeper. It thus becomes as it were, one with the subterranean nature and needs a strong will to pluck it out from those roots. Only when that is done can the whole being be ready to be offered to the Higher Power to occupy.

REASON

The lines of safety reason draws that bar
Mind’s soar, the soul’s dive into the Infinite.

(I.3)
Reason has a definite role in the evolution of the human consciousness—to organise, discriminate, and utilise the sense and thought movements for the development of the mental life. Beyond its legitimate sphere, however, reason becomes a limiting factor. It refuses credence and validity to movements and experiences that belong to realms of existence that are supra-rational: it shrinks from the summits of the mind where ideas are not products of reasoning but self-evident in their truth it is afraid to plunge into the depths of the pro-founder and broader consciousness to which the soul has a natural attraction. One must break away from the narrow safety lines drawn by reason in the expanding movement of yoga.

HUMAN POWER

Vain are human power and human love
To break earth's seal of ignorance and death.

(III.2)

The stamp of ignorance, falsehood and their consequence—death—is too all pervading and too deep-rooted to be removed by human will or human understanding. These features are rooted in a basic Inconscience from which all has emerged and it is only the pure and undeflected power of Truth, the direct action of the Truth-Consciousness that can
negative them. The human will has to invoke the Divine Will into operation.

OUTSTRETCHED HAND
FATE

_Even through the tangled anarchy called Fate... An outstretched Hand is felt upon our lives._

(I.4)

We reap what we sow. Every movement made by us, in the mind, the emotions, in the life-energies and in the physical creates a resultant movement which returns upon us in due time. Added to this law of individual _karma_, there is the law of collective _karma_ at various levels e.g. family, society, nation etc. Karmic forces from the larger field enter into our lives and play their own part. In effect there is a criss-cross of currents—determinable and not so determinable—that turns our lives into quite an anarchy of forces and elements. But the situation is not without any relieving feature. There is the infinite Compassion of the Divine helping us to endure and get through the maze of our _karma_; there is even, for those who consecrate themselves to the Divine, a Grace at work helping to mitigate the effects of karma, the workings of Fate.
RADICAL CHANGE (I)

Only sometimes a holier influence comes,
A tide of mightier surgings bears our lives
And a diviner Presence moves our soul.

(I.4)

We are, as a rule, subject to the innumerable currents and cross-currents of life, lost in the vortex of sensations, desires and strivings to fulfil them. Living becomes a mechanical routine, revolving in a circle of ignorance. But occasionally, a fresh, a higher and holier influence comes into our lives—may be through a person, through a book, through an experience opening up some window of the soul. The rhythm of life undergoes a change. Our lives are carried forward and upward by a wave of powerful impulsions—idealistic, religious or spiritual. We are no longer creatures of circumstances eking out a humdrum existence; we ride on the crest of a high-powered movement. A Presence more divine than any known before, a Power of God takes charge and moves our being. We are launched on the Path.

RADICAL CHANGE (II)

Or through the earthly coverings something breaks,
A grace and beauty of spiritual light,
The murmuring tongue to a celestial fire.

(I.4)
Or, it may be that something from the depths of the being breaks out of the thick crust of ignorance and inertia by which the soul is shut in. It is a flow and action of the undeformed grace and beauty of the light of the soul, the incessant prompting of the Godward aspiration of the inmost being, an articulation of the psychic—the child of the Divine. Life undergoes a deep change as a result of this outsurge from the inner domains of the soul.

SHAKTI

A power of silence in the depths of God.

(III.2)

God is infinite in Being. But he is not Existence alone. He is supremely self-aware and all-aware. And in the profund of his consciousness, from the depths of its silence, he wields a Power—a Power that effectuates what he wills in his consciousness. This is his Shakti, dynamically executive of his will. It is to this Shakti that he who seeks to grow in the Divine Consciousness and participate in its manifestation, lays himself open and surrendered.

CRISIS

Only in an uplifting hour of stress
Men answer to the touch of greater things.

(XI.1)
Normally the resources that men tap in themselves are in proportion to the call made on them by the circumstances of life. This relation of call and response settles down at a level that hardens into an average mechanical functioning. Men do not rise above that level. But when the stress from life is more and circumstances exert themselves with urgency, then the pressure is answered by a deeper response. To meet the situation, the being summons its latent powers into action and the whole consciousness and nature rise to unexpected heights.

SURFACES

*Our spirit tires of being’s surfaces,*

*Transcended is the splendour of the form;*

*It turns to hidden powers and deeper states.*

(II.2)

For the most part we live a life of ignorance, on the surface of our being. But as we grow in consciousness and the soul awakes within, we lose interest in this common superficial existence and start looking behind and beyond the external forms for the truth they ensoul, the truth that gives them meaning and purpose. We turn our gaze to the deeper levels of existence and become aware of powers that are latent within nature, within ourselves; we learn to grow into states of consciousness that are deeper and wider.
EGO DROPS

A greater Personality sometimes
Possesses us which yet we know as ours . . .
Then the small bodily ego thins and falls.

(I.4)

It happens at times in the course of yoga that we become aware of ourselves being taken up by a consciousness, a being larger and greater than ourselves. We are also aware that it is not totally different from ourselves; we feel that it is in some way our own self in the higher dimension. It is the Personality that oversees an evolution from above, the oversoul or the Jivatman. When this assumption of our lower being by the higher takes place, the physical ego, which plays such a large part in our normal life, loses its bearings, diminishes and drops off.

NO MORE SHUT

No more shut in by body’s wall and gates,
Her being a circle without circumference.

(VII.7)

In his normal existence man’s life is restricted to the range of his senses and his sense of being is confined to his bodily life centred round his ego. All else is ‘other’ for his divided consciousness. When he takes to yoga and expands his being, enlarges his consciousness beyond the ego-raised
walls, he begins to embrace more and more of the universe in his consciousness, breaking down the barriers. There are then no bounds to the expansion of his being.

**MEDITATION (I)**

*In moments when the inner lamps are lit*

*And the life's cherished guests are left outside,*

*Our spirit sits alone and speaks to its gulfs.*

(I.4)

Time and again the seeker needs to withdraw his faculties which are usually spread out in the external world, engaged in their desire-motivated preoccupations, and focuss them on the main objective of his life. He suspends his habitual activities of body, life and mind for the time being and directs his consciousness to become aware of itself, aware at as many points as possible viz., in the mind, in the heart, in the life-region and so on. He awakes to the world within. It is during these moments of contemplation that the being, the embodied spirit, is disengaged from external distractions and left alone; it gets an opportunity to commune with the depths behind the veil. The consciousness deepens itself, extends itself.
MEDITATION (II)

A wider consciousness opens then its doors;
Invading from spiritual silences
A ray of timeless Glory stoops awhile
To commune with our seized illumined clay
And leaves its huge white stamp upon our lives.

(I.4)

It is during such sessions of our self-gathering that the awakened consciousness widens itself and breaks out of its sense-bound walls. And on our being thus thrown open, there is poured down from the altitudes of the Higher Consciousness, from the silences of the Spirit some ray, some luminous force of the Eternal. This supernal Guest stays for a while communing with our upraised, illumined earth-self and when it departs, it leaves behind the unmistakable, unsullied stamp of its sojourn and action upon our lives.

We are no more what we were. We have undergone a permanent change.

THOUGHTS (I)

In our unseen subtle body thought is born
Or there it enters from the cosmic field.

(VII.6)

We are often intrigued to find certain thought-movements in us which have not been promoted by us and are even foreign to our thinking. That is
so because those thoughts are not a product of our conscious mind. They issue from the unseen and subtler regions of our being of which we are normally not aware and which entertain thought-movements of their own. Or it may be the thoughts have entered our unseen parts from the universal atmosphere where they are current. Having deposited themselves in these subtle layers, they surface when they choose and take us by surprise.

We are not the authors of all our thoughts.

THOUGHTS (II)

*We are greater than our thoughts.*

(V.2)

Because we are always full of thoughts and all our movements are preceded, accompanied and followed by thoughts, we are apt to think that our life is governed by our thoughts, our life is what our thoughts make it to be. But this is not the truth of the matter. As we gather ourselves for meditation in yoga, we become aware of some element in us which regards the flow of the thoughts; that element in our consciousness is the beginning of a thread which can lead us to a part that is not involved in the thoughts, but rises above them and, if we will, can exercise control and mastery over them. This part in us is our true self. Thoughts, feelings, impulses are only movements of nature. When we
are identified with this self we are truly greater than our thoughts.

MEDITATION (I)

_Called back her thoughts from speech to sit within_
_In a deep room in meditation’s house._

(X.3)

One may not speak verbally during meditation. But the speech goes on in the mind. Thoughts arise, one after another, and speak; they argue, they debate and fill the mind with their deafening noise. These thoughts are to be controlled and forced into silence. They must be pulled back from the arena of the active mind and retired, as it were, into the inner chamber.

MEDITATION (II)

_On meditation’s mounting edge of trance_
_Great stairs of thought climbed up to unborn heights_
_Where Time’s last ridges touch eternity’s skies_
_And Nature speaks to the spirit’s absolute._

(II.11)

As the consciousness gathers itself during meditation, there is an upward movement of ascent on the heights of the mind. Thought scales the
rarefied altitudes higher and still higher till the bounds of the duration of Time are left behind and one experiences a timeless moment. All Nature is concentrated and communes with the undefinable Spirit. There is nought else than the Eternal.

Such an experience may be brief—for only a few moments perhaps—but it marks the beginning of a realising phase; it repeats itself, each time lasting a little longer, till it gets established in the being.

**LADDER**

*A ladder of delivering ascent
And rungs that Nature climbs to deity.*

(II.1)

One discovers in this yoga that there are a series of graded steps of consciousness in the being. It is part of yoga to become more and more conscious of each of these levels of existence and forge an ascent step by step. Each successive climb delivers one into a larger freedom, a greater puissance. This is the course adopted by Nature in its progression from Inconscience to Superconscience, from Matter to Spirit and this also is the way for him who seeks to fulfil man’s mission in life—to arrive at his Godhead. From Matter to Life, from Life to Mind, from Mind to Higher Mind, from Higher Mind to Illumined Mind and thence to
Infinite Mind, Overmind, Supermind, Bliss, Consciousness and Existence—this is the broad evolutionary landscape spread before man.

**MEDITATION**

_on meditating peaks_

*Where life and being are a sacrament*

*Offered to the Reality beyond*

(II.6)

Meditation in yoga is an occasion for self-surrender to the Divine. One detaches oneself from identification with all that properly belongs to the lower nature in ignorance and soars in aspiration as high as one can to the purer heights of the being. Stationed on these musing summits, one gathers up one's life and being in a single movement of sacred offering and surrenders them to the Divine.

A repeated affirmation of this self-offering gradually deepens into a state of constant surrender.

**HEIGHT AND DEPTH**

*A highest height climbs to a deepest view.*

(X.4)

We are normally not aware of the depths of our being, the depths of life around. And unless we
become conscious of them we are unable to control
the elements that surge up from those depths and
pull us downwards. To plunge into these subterra-
nean regions, however, is not the best way. We
run the danger of getting bogged down and blinded
in our vision. The ideal way is to heighten our con-
sciousness and ascend the heights of our being.
Far from the summits of our existence, we get an
effortless and full view of the lairs of our depths
and also the power to purify them by expelling the
offending elements. From the heights also are seen
the hidden truths in the profounds of our being and
it becomes possible to bring them into activity.

MEDITATION

A calmness neared as of the approach of God,
A light of musing trance lit soil and sky.
And an identity and ecstasy
Filled meditation's solitary heart.

(IV.1)

A capital experience during meditation when
the seeker is alone in the solitude of his being—
away from the crowding thoughts and movements
of sense and feeling—, is the advent of a massive
calm, such as generally precedes the approach of
God. In this brooding trance a light breaks out and
illumines the whole being—from the physical to
the mental. Close upon this illumination of consciousness, arises a close identity with the Self, the Divine; an ecstasy wells up and fills the heart.

Though one may experience any of these felicities without the others necessarily entering, an integral experience follows this sequence: first a great calm, then an illumination of the consciousness; this is followed by identity with the deeper of higher Reality leading to an endless bliss.

**QUIET**

_Then all grew tranquil in her being's space, _
_Only sometimes small thoughts arose and fell _
_Like quiet waves upon a silent sea _
_Or ripples passing over a lonely pool _
_When a stray stone disturbs its dreaming rest._

(VII.6)

There comes a stage in meditation when the thought-activity flags and the mind is prone to fall quiet. A calm descends or emerges and envelops the being and a stillness takes possession of the mind. Even if a few thoughts arise, they are weak and their movements occur on the surface layers leaving the rest of the being tranquil and silent. They move like gentle waves on the bosom of a silent sea or ripples on a placid pool.
EXPERIENCES (I)

In the oblivious field of mortal mind,
Revealed to the closed prophet eyes of trance
Or in some deep internal solitude
Witnessed by a strange immaterial sense,
The signs of eternity appear.

(I.4)

As one progresses in the Yoga of Meditation, many kinds of experiences take place. When the external world is shut out from the active awareness and the consciousness is held self-concentrated, the inner vision ranging beyond the outer sight gets glimpses of a new order of realities in domains of mind that are normally veiled and obscure. Or one is withdrawn into oneself, deep in contemplation, alone with the soul. In such conditions of self-gathering, the subtle senses—sukshma indriya—come to life and begin to see the appearance of unmistakable signs of the revelations of the Reality that is eternal.

EXPERIENCES (II)

The truth mind could not know unveils its face,
We hear what mortal ears have never heard,
We feel what earthly sense has never felt,
We love what common hearts repel and dread;

(I.4)

The mind is ever in search of the truth of things; it labours, it strives but it is unable to grasp the
truth. When the definitive experiences of the higher Consciousness start in Yoga, the truth that has eluded the mind begins to reveal itself and yields its knowledge effortlessly.

Or, we begin to hear harmonies that are beyond the normal reach of the human ear; celestial notes sail in.

Or, feelings and touches which the physical senses cannot register begin to impinge upon the being; we open to subtler contacts.

Or, our hearts undergo an uplifting change; they start responding to what usually repels us, what we are commonly afraid of; we begin to love what we had feared. The capacity and the range of our hearts expand.

EXPERIENCES (III)

Our minds hush to a bright Omniscient;
A Voice calls from the chambers of the soul;
We meet the ecstasy of the Godhead’s touch
In golden privacies of immortal fire.

(I.4)

Or, our minds become silent and stand hushed in the presence of a luminous Wisdom. There is no more any mental activity to interfere with or dilute the inflowings of the plenary Knowledge that dawns on the horizon.
Or, an imperious Call comes from the depths of the soul. This call stands out from the innumerable pseudo-calls which crowd around us.

Or, we experience the ecstasy, the unalloyed bliss of the direct impact of the revealing Godhead in our spiritual secrecies where flames the eternal Agni, the divine fire of Will and aspiration.

SRUTI

_A channel of universal harmony,_
_Hearing was a stream of magic audience,_
_A bed for occult sounds earth cannot hear._

(I.3)

As the subtler levels of consciousness open up in the course of yoga, the subtler hearing begins to operate. One starts hearing sounds and melodies which are not of the common earthly type. They are celestial. At its highest, the inner ear gets open to a flow of speech from on high, words that are not thought out. This inspired speech comes from supernal sources and carries a unique creative and harmonising power; it is loaded with charges of the Truth-Knowledge and has the character of the Eternal from which it issues.
SOUNDS IN YOGA

It seemed the yearning of a lonely flute
That roamed along the shores of memory...
A cricket's rash and fiery single note...
A jingling silver laugh of anklet bells...
The tinkling pace of a long caravan
It seemed at times, or a vast forest's hymn,
The solemn reminder of a temple gong...
A bee-croon honey-drunk in summer isles...
Or the far anthem of a pilgrim sea.

(II.14)

As the inner hearing opens in the course of the development of consciousness in yoga, many are the sounds that are heard. They are of different kinds and one may hear one or many of them. They are signals that one is awakened on the subtler levels of the being.

The notes of the flute, the repeated chirp of the cricket, the chiming of bells, the sound of a passing caravan, the swell of an anthem, the striking of a gong, the humming of the bees, the roar of the ocean—these are some of the sounds that are experienced.

"He hears many sounds like those of the ocean, clouds, kettle-drum, cataracts, bell and horn, tinkling bells, flute, Vina and bees—

(Nadabindu Upanishad (32-36)*)

* The Hamsa Upanishad speaks of ten kinds of sounds: chini, chinchini, bell sound, conch, lute, cymbals, flute, drum, mridanga, clouds.
WORD (I)

The Word that ushers divine experience.

(III.3)

There are certain Words of Power, sound-bodies of concentration of Consciousness, that act as doors opening to the deeper realities of existence. These are the key-words or mantras which when concentrated upon and repeatedly affirmed in the being, bring about altered states of consciousness and initiate new experiences. Such words play an important part in the spiritualisation of consciousness under appropriate conditions such as communication of the mantra by a qualified Teacher cultivation of its powers in the being etc.

WORD (II)

An ear of mind withdrawn from the outward rhymes
Discovered the seed-sounds of the eternal Word,
The rhythm and music heard that built the worlds.

(II.11)

This creation has come into being as a manifestation of the Divine Consciousness vibrating in the form of the Logos. The potent Word whose rhythms constitute the celestial harmonies shape and sustain the worlds in existence. The basic sounds of this eternal Word are audible only to the subtle ear of him who practices yoga. The outer hearing, open only to external physical sounds,
must be withdrawn from the surface and joined to the inner hearing. Only then is it possible to listen to the creative rhythms of the Spirit.

OM

the sole timeless Word
That carries eternity in its lonely sound.

(II.1)

Om is the sound that resonates for ever in the cosmic rhythms. It is not a word constructed by the human speech. It is the original sound-vibration that issued and goes on issuing at the stir of the creative movement in the bosom of the Eternal. Om is the Logos out of which all else comes to be. By repeating this Word and dwelling upon it in consciousness, one links oneself with the Brahman, the Eternal in manifestation. It is the key to the all-pervading Reality.

MANTRA (I)

As when the mantra sinks in Yoga’s ear,
Its message enters stirring the blind brain
And keeps in the dim ignorant cells its sounds;

(IV.3)

The mantra is a potent word. It has a sound element and an Idea element; in fact it is the sound
body of the idea form of a truth received in the consciousness of the seer of the mantra. When it is uttered and repeated by the yogin in his concentrated practice, there is a double movement: the message i.e., the Idea, the meaning enters into the dormant brain and stirs it into awakening; the sound goes on depositing itself in the obscure physical cells. A twofold action commences.

**MANTRA (II)**

*The hearer understands a form of words*
*And, musing on the index thought it holds,*
*He strives to read it with the labouring mind,*
*But finds bright hints, not the embodied truth:*

(IV.3)

The mind that hears understands only the outer form of the words constituting the mantra. It has to grasp the thought clothed in these words and dwell upon it. Even this thought is not all; it is only a pointer, an index to the truth which it tries to express. All that the mind can succeed in catching by its labouring effort is some bright hints of the truth, not the truth itself.
MANTRA (III)

Then, falling silent in himself to know
He meets the deeper listening of his soul:
The Word repeats itself in rhythmic strains:
(IV.3)

In order to know that truth, the mind has to cease from its strivings and fall silent. In the silence of the mind, a deeper faculty of knowing, the listening of the soul awakes. The ear of the soul is tuned to the truth to be known. In this state of consciousness, the physical repetition of the mantra stops by itself, the utterance is taken up by the power in the Word and it goes on repeating itself in its own rhythm, filling the being with its vibrations.

MANTRA (IV)

Thought, vision, feeling, sense, the body’s self
Are seized unalterably and he endures
An ecstasy and an immortal change;
He feels a Wideness and becomes a Power,
All knowledge rushes on him like a sea;
(IV.3)

As the potent vibrations of this self-repeating Word spread out, all the movements of the mind, the heart, the life, the very body are seized by its power and the yogin is filled and inundated with an unearthly ecstasy. His whole being undergoes
a spiritual change. His consciousness spreads out into Infinity and becomes one with it; it becomes dynamised with a supernal Power. All Knowledge rushes on him from all sides. There is pervading invasion.

MANTRA (V)

Transmuted by the white spiritual ray
He walks in naked heavens of joy and calm,
Sees the God-face and hears transcendent speech.

(IV.3)

A spiritual light begins to play in the being and the consciousness is illumined by its pure white ray, unmixed with inferior hues. So uplifted, so transmuted, he moves in unveiled expanses of bright felicity and immutable calm. The form of God reveals itself to his inner eye and the Word of inspiration glides into his inner ear. His being is opened to illumination, revelation and inspiration.

INSPIRATION (I)

An inspired Knowledge sat enthroned within
Whose seconds illumined more than reason’s years.

(I.3)

The reasoning mind is not our sole or the highest faculty for knowing the works of reason
though it is a step—a necessary step—in the organisation of our mind and its knowledge. Above the reasoning intelligence there is another faculty of knowledge and that is inspiration which comes from a higher source. It is a knowledge which is not arrived at by the process of reasoning, but by a sudden communication of a self-existent knowledge to the awakened audition. It gives in a trice the knowledge that reason would take years to build up.

**INSPIRATION (II)**

*inspiration with her lightning feet,*  
_A sudden messenger from the all-seeing tops,*  
_Traversed the soundless corridors of his mind_  
*Bringing her rhythmic sense of hidden things._

(I.3)

It is when the mind is quieted, silent, free from the noise of thoughts, that the right condition is formed for the entry of inspiration. Inspiration is no laboured action. It is a swift, bright movement originated from the summits of the being where omniscience reigns; it pours new knowledge, activates the inner sense that is in tune with the deeper rhythm of existence, awakens the luminous thought:
Impeller to happy truths, the awakener in consciousness to right mentalisings ... Saraswati by the perception awakens the great flood and illumines entirely our thoughts.

(Rig Veda, I. 3.11-12)

INTUITION (I)

In the wide opening of its native sky
Intuition's lightnings range in a bright pack,
Hunting all hidden truths out of their lairs...
Its spear-point ictus of discovery
Pressed on the cover of name, the screen of form,
Strips bare the secret soul of all that is.

(X.4)

Intuition is a ray of Truth-Knowledge that lights up the being. When it acts one knows exactly what is to be known. It cuts across all barriers and lands on the precise object of knowledge, revealing its contents in a trice. This higher faculty of knowledge dispenses with all mental instrumentation and seizes the object directly.

INTUITION (II)

Mind's quick-paced thoughts...
Its flame-foot gallop they could imitate.

(VII.3)
The mind can successfully imitate the action of intuition. It projects its own rapid movement of thought as intuition. An unaware intelligence can easily be misled by this sleight of the mind into believing that it is guided by intuition.

OVERMIND

All here gathers beneath one golden sky:
The Powers that build the cosmos station take
In its house of infinite possibility;
Each god from there builds his own nature's world;
Ideas are phalanxed like a group of sums;
Thought crowds in masses seized by one regard.

(X.4)

The overmental region is the highest region in our hemisphere subject to cosmic Ignorance; beyond it are the worlds of the Supramental Truth. There is a brilliant "golden lid" that stands as a veil between the two. On this plane are gathered all the creative Powers before they are released into their careers, each with the freedom to manifest its possibility. Each Power, each God proceeds from here to build his own world; Ideas stand in formed phalanxes, Thoughts in their masses—but all are still held and governed by one Eye, one Consciousness. The seers of old describe:
There is a Truth covered by a Truth, where they unyoke the horses of the Sun; the ten hundreds stood together, there was That One.

(Rig Veda 5.62.1)

or,

The face of the Truth is covered with a golden lid.... O Child of the Father of beings, marshal and gather together thy rays.

(Isha Up. 15-16)

CENTRES

Our hidden centres of celestial force
Open like flames to a heavenly atmosphere.

(II.13)

There are, in our system, certain centres in the subtle body behind the external physical which are focii of spiritual energies. These centres are normally dormant; they awake and the forces concentrated in them get activated when pressure is exerted upon them or when they are exposed to an atmosphere that induces them to open. When we are in the company of those who have realised the higher Consciousness, there is a silent action upon these centres which open out spontaneously and bring about a change in our own being.

This is the value of satsanga, elevated company in spiritual life. It acts as a glowing fire that warms up all that comes in its ambience.
KUNDALINI

A flaming serpent rose released from sleep.
It rose billowing its coils and stood erect
And climbing mightily stormily on its way
It touched her centres with its flaming mouth:
As if a fiery kiss had broken their sleep,
They bloomed and laughed surcharged with light
and bliss.
Then at the crown it joined the Eternal’s peace.

(VII.5)

Within our system, at the base of the spine, lies an energy that is mostly dormant, only a part of it is current in the physical body as life-energy
This latent energy is a concentration of great power and is imaged as a serpent-power lying coiled up—the Kundalini. When this energy is awakened by yogic means or as a result of the natural action of a pressure of higher Consciousness, it shoots up along the spinal column, touching and awaking on its way the centres of consciousness that are threaded there in the subtle body. These centres are foci of different energies and are pictured as lotuses lying with their faces downward. As the mighty Power climbs up, it opens these lotuses which at once turn upwards and release their latent energies. Thus does the Kundalini Shakti ascend the various levels of consciousness in the being till it reaches the crown of the head the thousand petalled Lotus where is the centre of the Superconsciousness, the abode of the
Lord of the being. Then the two ends of the being—matter and spirit—are joined.

**AJNA (I)**

_the centre in her brow_
*Where the mind’s Lord in his control-room sits;_
*There throned on concentration’s native seat_
*He opens that third mysterious eye in man,*
*The Unseen’s eye that looks at the unseen.*

(X.4)

In the middle of the brow is the centre of vision, the will that sees. It is from here that the will of the yogin is concentrated and directed. It is also from here that the subtle eye peers into what is not seeable by the physical eye. When this centre is awakened and activised there is an increase of the effectuating will, *ajna*, and an expansion of vision in the consciousness.

**AJNA (II)**

*Above her brows where will and knowledge meet_
*A mighty Voice invaded mortal space.*

(VII.2)

In the centre of the forehead, above the eyebrows, is the region of vision and will, the *ajna*, the centre of command. It is from here that one begins
to rise over the boundaries of physical nature, see things beyond the limited range of physical vision, exercise a will that is superior to circumstances and formations around. Higher influxes of consciousness, of knowledge, of power often descend into this centre and from there radiate outwards or flow downwards. It is the highest station of consciousness within the body,—the mortal space,—the sahasrara, the thousand-petalled, being above the crown of the head.

THIRD EYE

There throned on concentration’s native seat
He opens that third mysterious eye in man,
The Unseen’s eye that looks at the unseen.

(X.4)

In the middle of the eye-brows is the centre of the subtle vision, the ajna, the seat of will and subtle sight. It is one of the centres of concentration in yoga. When this centre of consciousness is opened and activised, the subtle eye, the third eye—other than the two physical eyes—comes into operation. It sees things that are not visible to the physical sight. It sees with an inner vision that gazes at the truth of things, pierces into their mystery. It sends commands to all the members of the being and, when developed, to movements outside of oneself as well.
VISHUDDHA

the lotus of the throat
Where speech must rise and the expressing mind
And the heart’s impulse run towards word and fact,
A glad uplift and a new working came.

(VII.5)

In the throat lies the centre of expression, of manifesting speech. Whatever is conceived in the mind or gathered in the heart and seeks expression in words, finds its outlet in this filtering and externalising—visuddha—centre of the consciousness. When this is awakened, speech flows fluently and expresses closely the propelling impulsion.

ANAHATA

It glided into the lotus of her heart
And woke in it the Force that alters Fate.

(X.4)

In the middle of the chest lies the centre of the unstruck—anahata—Sound, the supernal throb. It is the centre of the irresistible will of the soul, the Force that flows direct from the divine Source of our being. When this centre is awakened, there comes a natural governance of the life by the inner soul.
NABHI-PADMA (OR MANIPURA)

In the navel lotus's broad imperial range
Its proud ambitions and its master lusts.

(VII.5)

In the region of the navel is the centre of the higher vital with its ambitions, passions, large impulsions, movements of expansion and conquest. When this is awakened the being is fired with impulsions and drives difficult to control without an active and purified consciousness.

SVADHISHTHANA

In the narrow nether centre's petty parts
Its childish game of daily dwarf desires.

(VII.5)

Below the navel is the centre of the lower vital; it is the field of small desires, petty passions and creature-longings. These movements gather force when this centre is activised and they can be subjugated only by rising to the higher levels of consciousness above it.

MULADHARA

In the deep place where once the Serpent slept,
There came a grip on Matter's giant powers
For large utilities in life's little space;
A firm ground was made for Heaven's descending might.

(VII.5)
At the base of the spine is the centre of the physical being, the basal support—*muladhara*—of its movements and activities. All physical powers and energies spring from here and a command of this centre is necessary if a firm base is to be provided for the descent of the Higher Consciousness-Force into the Physical and its liberating action on the latent powers in the body.

**SAHASRARA**

*the mystic lotus in her head,*  
*A thousand-petalled home of power and light.*  

(IX.1)

Above all these centres whose fields of action are in the physical body, there is the centre at the crown of the head—in fact above the head—commanding the higher mental reaches and opening into the infinity beyond. It is a region of pure thought and light, the seat of the Master of the being, the highest Self. To emphasise its boundless field, it is described as the thousand-petalled Lotus that is ever in bloom, opening downwards on the rest of the being.
IDEAL CONDITION

A Silence overhead, an inner Voice,
A living image seated in the heart,
An unwalled wideness and a fathomless point.

(I.4)

He who is well-set on the path of Yoga and is exclusively engaged in his pursuit of the Divine Reality is always open to the Silence of the Self that looms over all forms, all movements in the universe. Whatever may be the immediate preoccupation and activity of the surface being, the deeper part is always conscious and in communion with this immutable Silence. He is also attentive to the guiding Voice from within amidst the welter of conflicting voices that crowd upon him from all directions in his daily life. He carries in himself a vibrant image of his Ideal in the heart; it is a living and active Presence that is enthroned in the centre of his being, overseeing and governing his life-movements. Further he is not limited in his consciousness, not confined within the walls erected by his ego; those barriers have been pulled down and he is widely extended in his being, embracing more and more of the universe in his consciousness. He is conscious that he is a point of concentration in the cosmic extension of the Spirit, but a point that is not limited to its physical boundary; it is unfathomable, measureless in its depths.
KNOWLEDGE (I)

Then suddenly a luminous finger fell
On all things seen or touched or heard or felt
And showed his mind that nothing could be known;
That must be reached from which all knowledge comes.

(II.13)

Primitive man is satisfied with the knowledge built up by his senses. But as he grows in his mind, he realises its inadequacy and seeks to correct his half-knowledge. But even a full mental knowledge is found to be superficial as his consciousness develops; and a stage arrives, especially in yoga, when a benign realisation shows that all the thitherto acquired knowledge is only a construction of the labouring mind and not the true knowledge of things—of self and of the world. To get that knowledge one needs to attain to the Source of all knowledge, that from which all is derived and in which the knowledge of the all is self-existent, “by knowing what all this that is becomes known”.

(Mundaka Upanishad, 1.1.3)

KNOWLEDGE (II)

As knowledge grows Light flames up from within.

(X.3)

Living in this world of ignorance as he does, man's vision is always covered by a veil of half-lights; a shadow of obscurity, darkness pursues him
in all his movements. As, however, he wakes up to
the knowledge in the inner chamber of his being,
he experiences its rays of illumination breaking
through the opaque barriers of ignorance and
tamas. These flashes occur, at first, intermittently;
but as they increase their frequency and the nature
gets accustomed to them and assimilates their
workings, the Light of the soul flames up. The form
of Truth, says the scriptures, is Light, bharupah.

KNOWLEDGE (III)

A knowledge which became what it perceived.

(1.3)

Knowledge as we know it is an awareness of
the nature or content of an object. This is gained
by an approach from outside; the knower relates
himself to the object and gets to know what he can
by observation, concentration, deduction etc. The
best of such knowing can only be a partial know-
ledge. The true and full knowledge comes only
when one is identified with the object of knowledge.
The mind, the consciousness becomes one with the
object; the object yields its content to the knower.
This is the only knowledge that is perfect, know-
ledge by identity. The knower, known and the
knowledge merge into one.
KNOWLEDGE (IV)

- Thought was not there but a knowledge near and one
  Seized on all things by a moved identity.

  (II.14)

The thinking activity of the mind acts as a
veil and interferes with the revelation of the right
knowledge, the truth of things. It mixes its own
elements, dilutes and even deforms the higher know-
ledge. This thought-movement must be slowed down
and gradually brought to a standstill before that
knowledge can form itself. And when this con-
dition is achieved that self-existent knowledge
reveals itself as close to our being; it is a total know-
ledge, comprehending all in its vision, unlike the
fragmented knowledge of the mind which acts in
division. It has, besides, a different process of know-
ing: it does not approach what it wants to know
through reasoning, inference and the other modes
of the intellect, but urged by an inner soul-attrac-
tion, enters into an identity with it. This know-
ledge by identity is the result of a spontaneous
movement.

KNOWLEDGE (V)

I know that knowledge is a vast embrace,
I know that every being is myself,
In every heart is hidden the myriad One.

  (IX.2)
True knowledge cuts across all division imposed by the logic of the mind and seeks to comprehend all in one vision. It enlarges itself constantly till it can embrace all. The knower realises that there are in truth no ‘others’—all are himself variously poised. In all, including himself, dwells the One. The One Being casts himself in a million forms and takes his seat in the heart of each:

The Lord is seated in the heart of all beings
turning all beings mounted upon a machine by his Maya.

(B. Gita 18.61)

KNOWLEDGE AND PASSION

knowledge dwells not in the passionate hearts;
The heart’s words fall back unheard from Wisdom’s throne.

(X.2)

True knowledge arises when the being is calm. When there is agitation, restlessness, desire, passion there is only a composed thought-activity, mixed idea-formations. The intensities of the emotive heart, the turbidities of its passionate movements discourage the advent of knowledge. Even if knowledge were to precipitate itself under these conditions, it is certain to be mixed and diluted in the impurities of the vital and physical mind, the egomotivated emotions of the heart.
One has to purify and quieten the heart and mind before one can hope to receive and contain Truth-Knowledge.

ADVENT OF TRUTH

_All knowledge failed and the Idea’s forms,
And wisdom screened in awe her lowly head
Feeling a Truth too great for thought or speech._

(VII.5)

Our highest mental knowledge is but a poor and insufficient reflector of Truth. It does not touch the body of Truth. When as a result of the growth of consciousness, the being is ready to receive the Truth in its direct splendour, all the knowledge laboriously gathered by our mind loses its confident bearings; the various forms of thoughts and concepts in which the Idea clothes itself peter out; even wisdom on which our sattvic ego-mind prides itself retires into the background. The Truth that is preparing to manifest is too great for thought or speech to grasp and express.

_Not with the mind has man the power to get God, no, nor through speech._

(Katha Upanishad, 6.12)
SELF-EXCEEDING

Only when we have climbed above ourselves,
A line of the Transcendent meets our road,
And joins us to the timeless and the true.

(II.2)

As long as we are shut within ourselves, engrossed in our separate interests, limited by the bounds set by our ego and desire, we cannot grow in consciousness beyond our self-constriction in ignorance. It is only when we make a conscious effort to exceed these infant formations of nature and rise above their limits that we find a link, a natural pass to step into the domain of the Reality that transcends this lower existence in bondage. This line of contact enables us to lift ourselves from the temporal into the dimension of the eternal, from all that is untrue into the true.

PERSONAL AND IMPERSONAL

In the Impersonal’s ocean without shore
The Person in the World-Spirit anchored rode.

(II.15)

The philosopher’s perplexity as to whether the Divine is an impersonal Reality or a Person does not vex the spiritual practicant. To him both the Impersonal and the Personal are experienced as complementary aspects of the Divine in manifestation. The Impersonal is the boundless existence,
the infinite self-extension, of the Divine Being who projects the creative Movement out of himself. The Impersonal is the self-poise of the Divine to serve as the base and the field for his self-manifestation as the world-Spirit.

TOUCH SUPREME

A touch supreme surprised his hurrying heart,
The clasp was remembered of the Wonderful,
And hints leaped down of white beatitudes.

(II.9)

As the seeker strives to disengage himself from the clinging elements of the lower nature and pushes towards the heights of his higher self, he receives help at unexpected moments, in unforeseen ways. At times there is a sudden touch of the Divine Hand, felt concretely, throughout the being. The impatience of the heart is soothed and quieted; he feels the loving embrace of the All-Wonderful, the supreme Artist-creator; he gets unmistakable intimations of the purer realms of bliss awaiting him.

WONDERFUL

Thus we draw near to the All-Wonderful
Following his rapture in things as sign and guide;
Beauty is his footprint showing us where he has passed,
Love is his heartbeat's rhythm in mortal breasts,
Happiness the smile on his adorable face.
(II.2)

The universe is a revelation of the Wonderful, the adbhuta.* But we miss seeing him and his glorious handiwork because we are lost in the petty life of the senses engrossed in the superficies of life. We need to develop our finer faculties, open the doors of our perceptions to the working of the Powers characteristic of the Art of the World-Artist. We have to awaken to the notes of Delight underlying life-experience, learn to perceive Beauty of form and movement, respond to the call of Love and develop an attitude of cheerfulness and happiness. It is through these portals that we enter into the Kingdom of the All-Wonderful.

BODY STATUESQUE (I)

As the Voice touched, her body became a stark
And rigid golden statue of motionless trance,
A stone of God lit by an amethyst soul.
(VII.2)

When the impact of the Divine Consciousness takes place in its unimpeded power, the physical body often undergoes a striking change. The

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*Rig Veda 8.13.19
habitual restlessness of its energies, the readiness of its senses to respond to outer calls, come to a standstill. The body goes into a state of self-gathering, becomes gradually immobile, statuesque. But it does not become lifelessly inert and dull on that account. It has a lustrous glow, lit by the radiance of the awakened soul within.

The physical parts fall silent leaving the Divine Consciousness or Force a clear field to work and establish itself free from the dilutions or distractions of the external sense-movements.

**BODY STATUESQUE (II)**

_Around her body's stillness all grew still:_

*Her heart listened to its slow measured beats,*

*Her mind renouncing thought heard and was mute._

(VII.2)

The effect of this change is not confined to the body. It spreads out in the surrounding atmosphere, one feels a stillness, a powerful peace in its vicinity. Within the being so stilled, the heart is able to listen to its own beats—beats that are now slow, measured and rhythmic in contrast to their erratic pace in ordinary conditions susceptible to varying moods. The mind too is quieted, its usual thought activity is suspended; it hears the silence and falls mute.
LIFE-SELF

A mighty life-self with its inner powers
Supports the dwarfish medium we call life;
It can graft upon our crawl two puissant wings.

(VII.2)

What we call our life, the life-energies with which we live and function in our body are only surface currents of a larger life-reservoir within us and around us. This immense life-dynamo with the self, purusha, presiding over it is behind our physical exterior:

There is a second and inner Self which is other than this that is of the substance of food; and it is made of the vital stuff called Prana. And the Self of Prana fills the Self of food.

(Taittiriya Upanishad, 2.2.)

If we become conscious of this life-sUBLiminal within ourselves, and activise it in our existence, our whole life-movement expands, acquires a power and gait that far exceeds our present capacities. Our slow evolutionary effort is speeded up; it acquires wings.

DIVINE PUISSANCE ENTERS

An inner law of beauty shapes our lives;
Our words become the natural speech of Truth,
Each thought is a ripple on a sea of Light.

(VII.5)
A stage comes in the progression of Yoga when the Divine Shakti streams into the being and begins to take charge of the life-movements. Our lives are no longer at the mercy of outer circumstances; they begin to be governed and shaped from within; they flow out spreading the grace and charm of the soul. Life movements carry a growing stamp of nobility, dignity and beauty. Our words tend to become true; they become the natural expression of Truth. Our thoughts are no more products of the sense-mind, mentations of the discursive mind; they are wavelets, ripples on a sea of Light that is forming in our consciousness. Each thought is a luminous entity.

TRATAK

All vision gathered into a single ray,
As when the eyes stare at an invisible point
Till through the intensity of one luminous spot
An apocalypse of a world of images
Enters into the kingdom of the seer.

(I.3)

The centre between the two eye-brows on the forehead is an important centre for concentration in yoga. The whole consciousness is gathered and focussed at this point and the sight is concentrated there either on an outer physical form like a flower,
a flame, or on an imagined object within. As the
concentration gathers force, the sight opens on a series
of images that reveal a new, and subtler world. A
prophetic sight begins to form.

SUBTLE WORLD

A world of lovelier forms lies near to ours,
Where, undisguised by earth’s deforming sight,
All shapes are beautiful and all things true.

(II.2)

Next to our physical world, in the ascending
gradation of the worlds and planes of existence,
lies the subtle-physical world where things are cast
in an ideal world. They are the proto-types of
forms and movements in the grosser physical world.
It is a world of harmonies, beauty and rhythm.
The world of the Gandharvas, the celestial masters
of rhythms in sound, form and movement is there.
This is from where comes most of the inspirations
of true and just creations on earth. In their trans-
mission to and reception in the physical world
dominated by Ignorance they suffer a diminution,
a dilution and even a deformation.
MASTERY

*Only when we break through Matter’s wall
In that spiritual vastness we stand
Where we can live the masters of our world.*

(VII.6)

As long as we are confined in our consciousness
to the limits of our physical being, we are subject
to the oppressive laws of Matter; we are unable to
go beyond the dragnet of the material conscience.
It is only when we break out of these walls of
matter’s rule in our consciousness that we breathe
a freer air, wield a greater power. And when we
grow into the amplitude of the spiritual conscious-
ness we become masters of ourselves, our faculties
and our environment.

BALANCE CHANGES

*There Matter is soul’s result and not its cause.
In a contrary balance to earth’s truth of things
The gross weighs less, the subtle counts for more.*

(II.6)

Here in the material world, to the conscious-
ness governed by the laws of the physical, the soul
appears a result of the functions of the body, an
‘epiphenomenon’. But in the spiritual domain when
the consciousness takes on a spiritual character,
the material is seen to be a result, a determination
of the spirit, the soul. In that state, the gross does not impinge in the way it does in the scheme of the material creation; it counts less than the subtle which is more powerful, more active and more effective. The subtle is primary, not the gross.

SELF AND BODY

*In the enormous spaces of the self*

*The body now seemed only a wandering shell.*

(1.5)

When one lives in the outer consciousness, gross and crude by nature, the body preponderates in its importance over the other parts of the being, especially the soul, the self, which is completely lost to awareness. The body appears to be the one reality that is unmistakable in its concreteness and the subtler elements and parts appear hardly existing. This perspective, however, changes when one develops in consciousness; the physical body begins to dwindle in importance and no longer asserts its claim to be the sole or primary reality. And when one realises the Self and lives in its unbounded Consciousness, the body seems to be just a shell, a changing and dispensable case which does not affect the existence of the self.
CREATIVE FORCE

_This huge material universe became_
_A small result of a stupendous force._

(I.3)

As long as we are led by the physical senses and shape our lives on the basis of the data supplied by them, we are victims of the illusion of quantity. We regard the universe around us through our physical eyes and are impressed by the hugeness of its size. But when, in the course of the development of our consciousness brought about by yoga, the subtle vision and faculties open in us, and then a totally different picture emerges before us. We become aware of something behind this gross universe, a mighty Force which originates this universe and many other universes too; we also perceive that our material universes is only a petty result of the workings of this great Force.

The whole perspective undergoes a change.

SPACE AND TIME

_Space is himself and Time is only he._

(I.4)

Space and Time are not conditions imposed by some Maya upon the Being of the Supreme. It is the Supreme himself who assumes them for the purposes of manifestation. His infinity casts itself into Space.
His eternity pours itself into Time. Both are in a sense self-limitations of the Supreme to provide the framework of his creation. In yoga, one of the capital results of the extension of consciousness is this realisation of the bounds of Space losing themselves in the vasts of the Infinite and the moments of Time coming to a standstill in the Eternal.

DIVISION

Division ceased to be, for God was there.

(II.3)

All are in the divine Consciousness. But where that Consciousness is obscured, the oneness too is obscured. And when the Consciousness is that of the self-regarding ego, there is an acute sense of separation from the all. There is division between one another. For this division to go, one has to shed the ego and grow into the divine Consciousness.

NEARNESS

A nearness thrilled of the spirit to its source
And deepest things seemed obvious, close and true.

(VII.4)

As one plunges within in quest of the deepest Self, the distractions and calls of the surface life are
left far behind. Movements of mind and heart begin to fall silent. The consciousness is drawn inwards and more inwards till one clearly feels the approach of the source of one’s being. There is a vibration of causeless delight surging out from within. There is a profound change in the perspective. What had been difficult of conception becomes obvious, natural and real. Truths do not need to be sought and reasoned out any more; they become selfevident.

FACE OF TRUTH

the face of a veiled voiceless Truth
Hid in the dumb recesses of the heart
Or waiting beyond the last peak climbed by Thought.
(VII.6)

What we normally take to be the truth of our life is hardly more than a mental formulation of our own reasoning or the inherited tendencies from the environment. The real Truth of our being is not on the surface. It is not vociferous like the mental or the vital simulacrum. Deep beneath the movements and agitations of the emotions, in the profound of the heart, in the silent cave at the core, is hidden, guhā hitam,* the Truth. So too the Truth

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* Katha Up. 2.12
stations itself above the leapings of the restless thought—high above the range of thinking. Both the thought and the feeling have to be silenced before the Truth can be apprehended.

*hidden in the cavern heart of being, in the highest heaven.*

(Taittiriya Up. (2.1)

**SILENT COMMUNION**

*In the communion of two meeting minds*  
*Thought looked at thought and had no need of speech.*

(II.6)

With the developing of the consciousness by the practise of yoga, there is a widening and also an enhancement of the powers of consciousness. The extended consciousness learns to contact and embrace other forms of consciousness and know their contents. Thought in one mind can cognise thought in another without the need of a connecting speech. This communion and communication, however, become possible only in a complete silence when there is no interference by other activities of the mind.
SELF

above the birth of body and of thought
Our spirit's truth lives in the naked self
And from that height, unbound, surveys the world.

(VII.6)

Our true self is not the body; nor is it the mind. It is above both. Unbounded by the limits of the physical body, unconfined to the thinking range of the mind, the self stands above and oversees the life-movements. It is not turned away from the embodiment, but presides over its development. To discover this self of ourselves, we must cease to identify ourselves with the body, learn to draw back from the thought movements and stands above them. In the freedom thus gained, we begin to become aware of our larger existence and the status of our unlimited self.

MAYIC SPECTACLE

all seemed a vainly teeming vast
Upheld by a deluded Energy
To a spectator self-absorbed and mute,
Careless of the unnecessary show he watched,
Regarding the bizarre procession pass
Like one who waits for an expected end.

(III.3)

When, in the course of yoga, one detaches oneself from the world-phenomenon and takes a wit-
ness position in the self or when one is under the impact of a mighty Silence and a liberating uninvolved Consciousness, all that passes before the eye seems completely unreal, like figures on a cinematographic screen. Things appear mechanically propelled, they stay for a while and pass out of sight. The world strikes us as nothing more than a passing show with its end approaching at any moment. All appears as a throw-up of Maya. But this is only a phase of the unrolling of the Reality.

FRAGILE FORMS

this world of fragile forms
Carried on canvas strips of shimmering Time.

(I.2)

It is a powerful experience that comes to some in their inner unfoldment when they come into touch with the Immutable Self or the Silence of what strikes as a Non-Being at the first instance. One is taken up wholly by this profound Reality or state of Consciousness and that alone seems real; all the rest of the movements of the universe, appear unsubstantial, almost illusory. They look like figures moving on a cinematographic screen, shadowy shapes without reality, fluffy forms carried on the stream of time.
UNREAL

Existence's self was shadowed by a doubt;
Almost it seemed a lotus-leaf afloat
On a nude pool of cosmic Nothingness.

(II.13)

There is a stage in yoga when a powerful Silence settles upon oneself and all movement is relegated to a corner of the being as it were. Everything that passes looks like an image on a screen. One doubts whether the whole movement of the world is real or just a seeming. All looks as insubstantial as a leaf floating on the surface of water. Nothingness rather than Existence seems the basic stuff of things.

But this is merely a stage—a negative experience preparing for a more positive one to follow.

EMPTINESS (I)

His wakened mind became an empty slate
On which the Universal and Sole could write.

(I.5)

There is a stage in the development of consciousness in yoga when the mind is quietened, freed from the stress of restless thought-activity. It falls silent, but not asleep; it is awake to the vibrations of the higher and wider Consciousness. This state of blankness is favourable to the action of the
Universal Spirit, the One in All. The mind absorbs the rhythms of the Universal and acts as a centre for its activity.

EMPTINESS (II)

*Fear not to be nothing that thou mayest be all;*
*Assent to the emptiness of the Supreme*
*That all in thee may reach its absolute.*

(VII.6)

As the yoga-force works in its amplitude, there is a steady throwing out of the turbidities in the system, a progressive cleansing and emptying. The ego-self gets alarmed at the prospect of its own elimination and spreads its fear in the being. One shrinks and is afraid of the movements of the dislodging of the long-accustomed elements. But this is a fear and reaction of ignorance. It should be rejected. It is only by shedding the past formations of ignorance, by being 'nothing' that one becomes ready to be the all. In this emptiness, the Divine fills itself.

The cup is to be emptied before it can be filled.
BARE PEAK

On the bare peak where Self is alone with Nought
And life has no sense and love no place to stand.

(1-2)

There is a stage in the Yoga of ascension where the movement of progressive denuding of himself leaves the seeker in a state of bareness. All identifications with the phenomenal world have been dissolved. Even involvements in his own mind, vital and physical have been exceeded and he is aware of only his existence as the Self. And this Self comes face to face with Something that is ineffable, indescribable. It transcends all categories of existence and looms as an overpowering Nought, a sheer Silence in which life loses its meaning and love is irrelevant. In the presence of this hush that blots out everything, phenomenal life ebbs away convicted of its futility. Love exists no more as there is no longer any one to love for any other to be loved.

This is a capital experience, though not the ultimate, and it liberates the being from bondage to nature in ignorance.

NOUGHT (I)

In the smothering stress of this stupendous Nought
Mind could not think, breath could not breathe, the soul
Could not remember or feel itself.

(IX.1)
There arrives a stage in the development of yoga when on the borders of the thinking mind, before one is able to cross into the belt of the Consciousness beyond it, one is face to face with what impinges as a great Blank, an indefinable, Something that negates everything. Before this overwhelming Shadow of the Transcendent, all feelings, all thoughts are stunned into silence. The Mind falls mute, the breath lies suspended as it were and the very sense of one’s existence fades away.

This, however, is not the final truth as it seems to appear. It is only a vestibule to the greater splendour of the Spirit opening beyond.

**NOUGHT (II)**

*What seemed the source and end was a wide gate.*

(III.2)

As one passes into the experience of this truth of Nirvana where all determinations are exceeded and freedom from all form, all movement is affirmed, one is apt to look upon it as the source and end of all things. But if one endures the impact calmly and waits in silence, slowly this state of blankness gives place to more positive revelations of the Reality. The glories of the upper hemisphere in Creation begin to appear in the consciousness of the seeker.
VOID (I)

*This Void held more than all the teeming worlds,*
*This blank felt more than all that Time has borne,*
*This dark knew dumbly, immensely the Unknown.*

(VII.5)

When the seeker arrives at the frontier of his mind in his ascent to the heights of the Spirit, he becomes aware of a great Void, a sheer blank, an impenetrable darkness that threatens to overwhelm him. However, when he looks into it with a steady eye, he finds that this Void is not an empty Void but a Void full of potentials, this blank is not an inert blank but a vibrant blank which registers all that has gone before and is to come, this dark mass is not a dark mass of inconscience but a mass of superconscience loaded with an immediate knowledge of the Unknown.

VOID (II)

*The child of the Void shall be reborn in God.*

(V.3)

There is a stage in yoga where one is progressively denuded of things that belong and constitute the life of our normal nature. One finds oneself gradually emptied and sucked into a kind of void. But this is not the final end, it is only a passage. When this void in and around one's being is well-settled,
it gets filled with a new, divine consciousness. One is reborn in the Divine.

**DYNAMIC ONE**

*All things are wrapped in the dynamic One.*

(II.2)

There is a line of yoga in which one detaches oneself more and more from sense-objects and movements of the world and gain proximity to the lone Self within. When one attains identity with this Self that is aloof and detached, all else appears otiose, unreal. But there is another movement of yoga in which one extends oneself, enlarges one’s consciousness. As this development proceeds one comes to perceive that all things are based upon and held in one Unity—a Unity that contains oneself within it as well. If the Self that is felt as excluding all else can be described as the static Reality, the Unity that contains all is the dynamic One. Both are complementary aspects of the Absolute.

**ONE AND MANY (I)**

*A thousand aspects pointed back to the One.*

(X.3)

Division exists only as long as we look from the standpoint of the ego which insists on a separate
identity for itself. As the standpoint changes, however, the appearance of separativity also undergoes a change. When the consciousness breaks out of the limitations imposed by the ego or when the deeper levels of the being nearer the soul are activated, we begin to see that what seemed to be so many separate beings or forms are really the many aspects, poises of the One Reality. Each points to its Source which is also the Source of others. The many do not distract the eye. They underline the multitudinousness of the One. It is

the Self-Being that has become all existences.
(Isha Up. 7)

ONE AND MANY (II)

The One carries the multitude in his breast.
(X.4)

The multiplicity is put out by the One. But it is not cut off from its source and left to develop on its own. As we enter into identity with the One manifest in the universe, the Universal Divine, we perceive, we even experience how the One holds the multitude in its bosom; it is never separated from the many. The One is all-inclusive, nothing exists outside of the One Reality.

All existences are in the Self.
(Isha Up. 6)
ONE AND MANY (III)

*In every heart is hidden the myriad One.*

(IX.2)

Not only does the Self contain All in itself, but it indwells each of the All. This becomes patent to experience when we enter into the depths of our being and realise our oneness with the Divinity at its core. Stationed there in the Self basing our embodiment, we recognise the Self inhabiting other bodies and feel our oneness with it. This fact of the One dwelling in all forms, all hearts, is never lost sight of and it makes for a radical change in our life-style.

*He who sees everywhere the Self in all existences and all existences in the Self, shrinks not thereafter from aught.*

(Isha Up. 6)

PLAN

*All is a single plan; each wayside act Deepens the soul’s response, brings nearer the goal.*

(X.3)

The seeker must learn to see the workings of the Divine Consciousness behind all the bewildering appearances in the world. There is a plan, a scheme, inevitably developing towards the intended goal. Once he perceives this truth, life changes its hue. All happenings reveal themselves as steps of a single
ladder of progress. Every act, every movement, however insignificant seemingly, impacts upon the soul more and more deeply pushing it nearer and nearer its destination. One must develop this eye to the divine design in the universe.

FLASHES

_A glimpse or flashes came, the Presence was hid._

(VII.1)

It is common in yoga, especially in the earlier phases of experience, to see flashes of light, to get visions of various kinds. They are not self-revelations of the Divine, but 'signals of eternity'. They are sign-posts on the journey of the Spirit and have the value of confirming the existence of a supraphysical order of Reality and of one's own self being open to its action. But one cannot invest them with any finality of realisation. The Divine, the Supreme Reality, that is the object of one's quest, is still veiled. It is still beyond. The effort must be kept up, the voyage continued.

VEIL

_A veil is kept, something is still held back,_
_Lest, captive of the beauty and the joy,_
_Our souls forget to the Highest to aspire._

(II.2)
The full beauty and joy of life is not revealed to man as long as he lives in ignorance. A veil is drawn so that he keeps up the effort to grow, to expand beyond his current limits. Otherwise he would be content with the ease of his normal existence and would not exert himself to remedy his imperfections, to aspire to greater and more satisfying heights in evolution.

**SILENT BEING**

*veiled from her was the silent Being within*
*Who sees life’s drama pass without unmoved eyes,*
*Supports the sorrow of the mind and heart*
*And bears in human breasts the world and fate.*

(VII.1)

Behind all the incessant activity of our mind, our emotional being, our life-force and the mechanical movements of our physical being there is something in us that stands apart, aloof, uninvolved in the movement. Only it is veiled from us by the several layers of ignorance and unconsciousness. We begin to become aware of it as we shift our centre of consciousness from without to within. As we go deeper we feel the presence and the station of the Self, the silent Being within who though not involved, still takes cognisance of what goes on as a witness, upholds the developing personality in its experience of joy and sorrow and by his sustenance
makes it possible for us to undergo the labours and struggle of evolution forward and upward.

To become conscious of this Self is the first step in the liberation from the slavery to nature.

**PSYCHE**

*But for such vast spiritual change to be,*  
*Out of the mystic cavern in man’s heart*  
*The heavenly Psyche must put off her veil*  
*And step into common nature’s crowded rooms*  
*And stand uncovered in that nature’s front*  
*And rule its thoughts and fill the body and life.*

(VII.2)

The true spiritual principle in us is deep within, at the core of the being—it is the *psychic*. The psychic exerts its influence on the outer instrumental being of mind-life-body and awakens it to the necessity of progress Godwards. To effect the transmuting change of life and nature that is envisaged in this yoga it is indispensable that this psychic entity comes forward from its hidden chamber behind the veil of nature and takes its rightful place in the active being, governing the movements of the mind, the life and the body and leading them in a purposive spiritual evolution. The psychic alone has the consciousness that is directly in communion with the Divine.
PRAYERS

Heaven’s wiser love rejects the mortal’s prayer.
(VI.2)

Men pray to the benign Powers for what they need or what they think they need. But their sight is limited and often it happens that their imagined good turns out to be harmful. They do not know what is truly good for them, for the growth of their soul. However, there is a wise Providence which saves the situation. This compassion, this Divine Love, has a truer application of things and it negatives men’s demands should they be injurious to their well-being. Men often realise later on how good it was that their prayers were not answered and thank the Divine for it.

CAVERN OF THE SOUL

There in the silence few have ever reached,
Thou shalt see the Fire burning on the bare stone
And the deep cavern of thy secret soul.
(VII.3)

As one goes deeper within oneself in quest of his true inner self, the noise and clamour of the ego-self, the surface being, the restless energies of life and mind recede and one enters a deepening silence. One almost hears the silence. Going deeper the passage narrows further till one arrives at a bare, still spot feeling like a small cave, the cave in
the heart, hrdd-guha. Here one beholds the self in the form of a flame; Light is its form, bhārupah, says the Upanishad (Chhandogya Up. 3.14.3)

OCCULT CAVE

He found the occult cave, the mystic door
Near to the well of vision in the soul,
And entered where the Wings of Glory brood
In the sunlit space where all is for ever known.

(1.5)

As one delves into the inner depths of the being, a whole world of consciousness begins to unroll itself. A passage forms, step by step, to the chamber of the soul. This path narrows itself as one approaches the sanctuary and leads to the entrance of the secret cavity of the spiritual heart which resembles a cave, hrdd guha where one

finds Him hidden in the cavern heart of being.

(Taittiriya Up. 2.1)

Here at the core of the being is the never-fading light of the soul, the luminous vision of Truth, the source of Knowledge infallible knowledge by identity.
LIGHT IN THE CAVE

The Truth-light in the cavern-heart
That burns unwitnessed in the altar crypt
Behind the still velamen’s secrecy
Companioning the Godhead of the shrine.

(II.8)

In the deepest chamber of the heart burns a flame—a flame that is not lighted by human hands but is a self-existent light of Truth that burns in the profound secrecy of the being, behind all the thickening layers of the obscured consciousness of nature. It is the form of Truth, for light is its form, bhārupah. This luminous flame is where the Indweller, the divine master of the being is seated.

HIDDEN DOORS

But once the hidden doors are flung apart
Then the veiled king steps out in Nature’s front.

(VII.5)

The true ruler of our being sits deep within behind the several veils of ignorance and ego. These intervening barriers are experienced in yoga as so many doors to be opened by self-effort and the action of Grace. They are the portals which must be moved to part before the passage is free for the indwelling Divinity to come forward and assume direct charge of our being. Even when the doors
are opened there is the persistent tendency of nature to close them again and again; constant vigilance, patience and effort are needed to keep the doors apart.

DAEMON (I)

The mighty daemon lies unshaked within,
To evoke, to give it form is Nature’s task.

(II.10)

At the core of our being, in the silent chamber of the heart, hrid dese,* sits the Indweller, a very portion of the Divine,** eternal, immutable, above and behind the movements of our multiple nature. He is to be evoked, made active in our consciousness before we can change and unite ourselves with the Divine. Nature’s labour is to awaken us to this Presence within and build a personality for it with which it can be effective in life. That is the first capital movement in this yoga.

* Bhagavadgita 18.61
** Bhagavadgita 15.7
DAEMON (II)

a foreseeing Knowledge might be ours,
If we could take our spirit's stand within,
If we could hear the muffled daemon voice.

(I.4)

Our knowledge is normally limited to the immediate evidence of the senses and is unable to peer with any accuracy into the future. And yet it is possible to acquire that faculty of a foreseeing Knowledge if only we shift our centre of consciousness from the surface of the physical existence to the level of the Spirit within our being, by living more and more within. The active soul in ourselves takes cognisance of our experience and our needs and it speaks in its own way. But in the loud clamour of our ego, the noisy jostlings of our thoughts and the hectic movements of our emotional being, its voice is lost, smothered. We need to hold ourselves in an expectant silence to hear it speak.

THUMB-SIZED PURUSHA

A being no bigger than the thumb of man
Into a hidden region of the heart.

(VII.5)

The Divine is not somewhere above the universe requiring man to overpass the world and shoot beyond to realise his union with the Reality. The Divine dwells in the heart of each being and may
reveal itself in many ways: may be as a constant Presence, may be as a silent Flame; may be as a being, tiny in size—"no larger than the finger of man".* This being, the *purusha*, is found in the cave of the heart,** in the recesses of the inner being as a culmination of the inner quest.

**WITNESS**

*At last there wakes in us a witness Soul*  
*That looks at truths unseen and scares the Unknown;*  
*Then all assumes a new and marvellous face.*

(II.5)

As we disentangle ourselves from the mechanical operations of *prakriti*, and find a poise in our consciousness that is above these eddies of the outer nature, we become aware of the *purusha*, the conscious soul in us that is not involved in movements, but merely witnesses them; it is also cognisant of much that is not patent to the outer eye. The soul is open to intimations from the Unknown and its horizons are constantly expanding. When this dimension of the soul opens, life changes its hue and the All-Wonderful reveals its presence in innumerable ways.

*angushthamatrah (Katha Up. 4.12)*  
**niḥṭo guḥayam (Katha Up. 2.20)**
TWO BIRDS

Two beings, he was, one wide and free above,
One struggling, bound, intense, its portion here.
A tie between them still could bridge two worlds.

We are not only the limited soul bound to its nature. That is one being of ourselves. Above our bounded being there is another, free and wide. It stands aloft, aloof and watches our other being that struggles below to exceed its nature and free itself. But the lower being is not different from the higher one; it is a part, a portion of the higher projected into the movement of Nature. If the being below links itself in consciousness with its fellow above, the division between the lower, ignorant, nature and the higher, divine nature ceases to be. The two beings move towards a merger and all struggle, all sorrow falls away from the lower being.

"Two unborn, the Knower and one who knows not, the Lord and one who has not mastery . . .

"The soul seated on the same tree of Nature is absorbed and deluded and has sorrow because it is not the Lord, but when it sees and is in union with that other self and greatness of it which is the Lord, then sorrow passes away from it."

(Svetasvatara Upanishad 1.9; 4.7)
GRACE

(I) shed my grace on the foolish and the wise.

(VII.4)

The Divine Grace falleth where it listeth.

There are no sinners and non-sinners, no wise and unwise before the eye of Grace. These are human considerations based upon man-made standards which do not apply to a Consciousness that is beyond them. There are no deserts as such in the choice of the Grace. He who is ready in soul, he in whom the state of Grace has been built up—in the present existence or prior—becomes the receptacle of the Grace. His virtue and vice, achievements and failures, are not the deciding factors. The Grace, if it chooses, can make the lame cross the mountain.

DESCENT OF GRACE (I)

In the unfolding process of the Self
Sometimes the inexpressible Mystery
Elects a human vessel of descent.

(I.4)

To the human mind as it is constituted, the workings of the Divine Self in manifestation are a mystery. They cannot be explained or understood in terms of the mind’s reasoning. The way and the choice are the Divine’s own. They are not determined by human laws. The Divine alone chooses
where it will manifest and in what manner. It is not the effort of man that decides but the election of the Grace. Effort has its place, but is not the deciding factor.

_The Self is not to be won by eloquent teaching, nor by brain power, nor by much learning; but only he whom this Being chooses can win Him; for to him this Self bares His body._

(Katha Upanishad, i. 2.23)

And when the Divine Grace chooses one as its instrument of action, he becomes the recipient, the human vessel to hold and contain the descending charge of the Divine Consciousness.

**DESCENT OF GRACE (II)**

_A breath comes down from the supernal air,_
_A presence is borne, a guiding Light awakes,_
_A stillness falls upon the instruments._

(I.4)

When the recipient of the Grace is thus chosen, a divine breath, a strong vibration of the divine Being floats down from the heights of the Spirit and he becomes aware of a high Presence in the atmosphere, in and around himself—a _sannidhya_. Within himself awakes a Light that was dormant before. And this Light of the soul not merely illumines but actively guides. It assumes the lead and
directs the life movements. All the agitations, the rajasic eagernesses of the instruments e.g., mind, emotive faculties, vital energies, physical body, calm down and a powerful quiet comes over them. They do not become inert, they get still, and gathered.

DESCENT OF GRACE (III)

*Fixed sometimes like a marble monument
Stone-calm, the body is a pedestal
Supporting a figure of eternal Peace.*

(1.4)

At times even the physical body undergoes a remarkable change. It loses its habitual restlessness, its proneness to mechanical activity and passes into a firm, immobile poise. It becomes steady and actually feels a stone-like calm in and around it. It stays like a statue. Such a body becomes a veritable foundation, an unshakable base for the figure of immutable and timeless Peace in which the whole being is transformed.
DESCENT OF GRACE (IV)

Or a revealing Force sweeps blazing in;
Out of some vast superior continent
Knowledge breaks through trailing its radiant seas,
And Nature trembles with the power, the flame.

(I.4)

Or, at times, there is an invasion by a supernal Force. It is a Force that is luminous and as it rushes in, it opens up new domains of vision and experience. From on high, from altitudes new and vast, Knowledge pours in masses of radiance and floods the being. At this impact of the higher Power, of the luminous flame of Knowledge, Nature is overpowered and shakes under the force. There is even a temporary disturbance in the instrumental nature.

GOD GROWS IN MAN

Many are God's forms by which he grows in man:

(VII.4)

The forms in which man can meet God are not limited to those prescribed in religious scriptures. All are his movements, all are forms of his embodiment. If only man is conscious he can perceive how God uses any form, any circumstance to manifest himself, to grow in him who makes room therefor. Not only the pleasant and sweet, but even
the painful and bitter experiences are used by God to develop man’s consciousness towards its integrality. There is nothing high and low in God’s scheme; all are means for his revelation.

STEPPING STONES

_I make even sin and error stepping stones_
_And all experience a long march towards Light._

(VII.4)

No experience is too insignificant in spiritual life. Every movement, every happening has a meaning if only we have the sight to perceive it. We must, for that purpose, take our poise outside the narrow ego-view and look at things from the standpoint of the developing soul. So seen all reveals its purpose; all goes to build the elements needed for the progress of the being towards the Divine Light. Even what is dubbed as sin has a chastening effect when one is sincere of soul. Even error, when recognised, contributes to the growth of a surer discrimination and like faculties.

OPENING

_If the chamber’s door is even a little ajar,_
_What then can hinder God from stealing in_
_Or who forbid his kiss on the sleeping soul?_

(X.4)
Man is normally lost in the routine movements of his struggle for existence. He leads a mechanical life. His soul lies dormant behind thick veils of ignorance and clouds of desire and ego. And yet there are moments when something in him stirs and the inner door opens however slightly. It is such occasions that are seized by the Divine in his solicitude to enter into the chamber of man’s soul and awaken it to its mission; once the soul receives this touch of Grace, there is no respite for it till it sets out on the Quest and arrives at its goal. The pilgrimage of the soul has begun.

LOVE

*Love is the yearning of the One for the One.*

(I.3)

The attraction felt by one human being to another is based upon several factors. There may be mental affinity or common interests or vital desire for exchange of emotions at various levels and so on. That is not love. True love is deeper in its origin. It is the call of the Divine in one to the same Divine embodied in another. On the surface, this yearning may express itself initially in any of the human forms. But it is not really due to these causes. This love is never self-regarding, never claiming; it is always self-giving and uncalculating.
It is a movement of the soul, the first step towards its identification with the Divine in the Universe.

**LOVE DIVINE (I)**

*Only when thou hast climbed above thy mind*
*And livest in the calm vastness of the One*
*Can love be eternal in the eternal bliss*
*And love divine replace the human tie.*

(VI.1)

Human attachment, masquerading as love pulls the consciousness down from Godward heights and keeps it confined within the grooves of self-regarding desire inevitably open to constant disappointment, frustration and suffering. One has to break out of the ego-infested, restless mind and find one's equilibrium in the calmer and broader heights of one's consciousness where the sense of possession is foreign and the experience of unity is natural before human love can change and turn into divine love, before the stress of attachment can turn into the bliss of identity.

**LOVE DIVINE (II)**

*Love in her was wider than the universe.*
*The whole world could take refuge in her single heart.*

(I.2)
True love, the love of the soul for soul, arises only when one's consciousness moves away from its moorings in ego and desire and expands to embrace more and more of the life around. In time this love establishes itself as a fount of oneness and joy of union with the whole universe and even more. The heart widens, the mental horizons extend endlessly and all is held in the grasp of divine love.

To enlarge one's consciousness in all directions is the one, sure means to open to divine love.

ACTS AND LOVE

A lifting up of common acts by love.

(VII.1)

Acts can bind, they can liberate. This depends not upon the nature of the acts themselves, but on the spirit with which they are done. Acts done with the ordinary motive of self-interest and ego-motives forge their chains of karma and confirm the doer in his state of ignorance and slavery to nature. But if a nobler motive moves the doer, that mitigates the karmic consequences. If, for instance, love for God, for God in humanity, inspires an action,—however seemingly ordinary—it lifts up the activity to a superior soul-level and not only does such an act not bind in the manner of common acts, but it generates liberating forces in the situation,
CENTRE OF REFERENCE

Circling round a single luminous point,
Centre of reference in a conscious field,
Figure of a unitary Light within.

(II.4)

It is indispensable, in the course of yoga, to shift our centre of reference from the usual ego-standpoint to a deeper centre nearer the soul within. We need to establish a new poise in our being in which every action and reaction—mental, vital or physical—is automatically referred to and originated from that projection of the soul’s Light which integrates all movements in one whole. The entire life is organised around this luminous centre of our deeper consciousness.

LIGHT (I)

By Light we live and to the Light we go.

(X.1)

With all our stumbling in the ignorance, with all the obscurities in our nature making us err in thought and in action, we manage to live in a world that is riddled with uncertainties, deflections and death. That is because within us, there is the Light of the soul guiding us, whether we are aware of it or not. It guides us to survive dangers and pitfalls and urges us in its own way to take to the Path that leads to the fuller and larger Light of God. It throws
its luminous rays on our course and shows the direction in which we are to proceed in our life-journey.

LIGHT (II)

Yet Light is there: it stands at Nature's doors:
It holds a torch to lead the traveller in.
It waits to be kindled in our secret cells.

(X.3)

Ordinary life throws up innumerable difficulties but when man takes up spiritual life more stresses are added by recalcitrant nature opposed to any change in her habits. Man's resources are limited and often they are strained so hard that he is driven to despair. But he does not go under. That is because unknown to his surface mind there is a Divine Light that saves. It is there behind the veil of nature, shedding whatever light it can on the route of the journey. It can come into its own and become a dynamic Power to help and lead only when it is kindled in ourselves, in our very cells. We must first awaken to its existence and then exert to make it function actively and openly in our life.
LIGHT FLAMES UP

As knowledge grows Light flames up from within:
It is a shining warrior in the mind,
An eagle of dreams in the divining heart,
An armour in the fight, a bow of God.

(X.3)

As one grows in consciousness and the Knowledge of the inner being grows more and more, the Light of the soul flames up illumining all within and without. It presents itself in the mind as a luminous power spotting and driving away false and wrong formations of ignorance; in the intuiting heart it casts itself as a flashing ray of omniscience; in the incessant battle with the nether elements and adverse forces, it acts as an unfailing armour, a far flinging weapon of God.

WRONG

Wrong could not come where all was light and love.

(III.2)

Wrong movements of mind and heart take place because we tend to live in the shadow of ignorance, shut in by the walls erected by our desire-ego. The right consciousness is unable to act under these constraints. If, however, we take steps to extend our awareness, raise the level of our thinking into a clearer light and widen ourselves in
understanding and love, these wrong placements of consciousness cease to be. There is a spontaneous turn to right thought, right feeling, right expression.

DIVINE SENSE

Cast from thee sense that veils thy spirit’s sight.
In the enormous emptiness of thy mind
Thou shalt see the Eternal’s body in the world,
Know him in every voice heard by thy soul:
In the world’s contacts meet his single touch;
All things shall fold thee into his embrace.
(VII.2)

It is the physical senses that dart outwards towards their objects and fill the mind with their movements. This ceaseless activity of the senses overlays and obstructs the vision and movement of the inner, the true being. It must be slowed down and gradually stopped. Only then can the mind be cleared of all distractions and readied for the action of the deeper and the larger sense of the spirit. The being enlarges itself endlessly and feels the concrete Presence of God in the world. Every contact, every impact is felt to be the touch of the Eternal. Whatever the experience, it is the Divine Being that one meets with. One lives in the Divine. All changes into a play of the Divine.
SENSES

The senses there were outlets of the soul.

(III.3)

Normally the senses act as covers of the soul. They are extrovert, with their doors opening outward—as described in the Upanishad*—and they fill the consciousness with their consuming activities centred round the fleeting objects in the world. The soul does not get a chance to come forward and participate—much less lead—in the life-movement.

But as the yoga proceeds and the senses are drawn in—“like the limbs of the tortoise”**—their functioning undergoes a radical change. They turn into windows and instruments of the soul. They go into operation only at the behest of the soul and act as channels for its will.

IN TUNE WITH GOD

Conquer thy heart’s throbs, let thy heart beat in God:
Thy nature shall be the engine of his works,
Thy voice shall house the mightiness of his Word.

(VII.2)

The mind and heart of man are tuned to the life-movements in the external world. Thy move in unison with the ebb and flow of nature. He who

* Katha Up. 4.1
** Bhagavad Gita 2.58
seeks the Divine must release himself from this habitual, mechanical action of nature. He must link himself with the Divine Being, the Divine Movement and learn to respond to its impulsions. His dynamic nature must cease to be motivated and actuated by desire and ego; it must turn into a ready instrument of the Divine Will. His speech must not be a channel of waste of consciousness; his voice should learn to express only the Divine Word, the creative Power of the Divine.

LIMBS

_The limbs were trembling densities of the soul._

(IX.1)

The physical body of man is intended to be a conscious dwelling place and vehicle of the soul. But due to inertia, obscurity and its elements of inconscience, the body acts as a gross covering over the indwelling soul. It is a part of yoga to rid the body of this grossness and train it to be more and more conscious of itself and of the informing soul. In time as this inner discipline proceeds, the body not only turns into a ready instrument, but it develops into a sensitive vehicle of the soul, reflecting its moods, transmitting its impulsions. The physical limbs render the vibrations of the soul at the material level.
HUMAN LIMITS

Only in human limits man lives safe.

(IX.1)

Man can live securely his life in ignorance as long as he confines himself to the boundaries of that ignorance. His normal existence is served by the senses and faculties of mind, life and body proper to the narrow range of awareness and action that are natural to his superficial living. Were he to exceed these limits, his finite life would be open to the invasion of the infinite around and his precarious balance would be upset. He would be sucked into the larger universal movement pressing upon him, out of the cloistered safety in his ego-determined bounds.

The seeker of the Infinite has to break out of this narrow circle of safety by discarding the imprisoning mould of his primitive life in ignorance. He has to consciously enlarge himself and embrace more and more of the Universal life so that eventually he becomes one with it, participates in its movement securely.

GIFT FROM BEYOND

A little gift comes from the Immensitudes,
But measureless to life its gain of joy,
All the untold Beyond is mirrored there.

(II.9)
Above the narrow horizons of man's limited being, there are the infinitudes of the Spirit—realms of Existence in which the verities of Knowledge, Power, Peace, Bliss reign in their absolute freedom. Even a little of these, when it is vouchsafed to man by the Divine Grace, brings about a tremendous change in the quality of his life. It adds a touch of felicity that is eternal, does not depend upon external factors and opens out a new dimension of growth. Though it may appear small quantitatively, this gift partakes of the whole nature of the Eternal, the Infinite and the Impartible and hence is potent enough to initiate a movement that could transmute the mortal into the immortal.

BLISS WITHIN

In the sealed hermetic heart, the happy core . . .
The eternal Entity prepares within
Its matter of divine felicity.

(II.5)

Despite all the trials and tribulations that we are subjected to in life, despite all the pain and suffering, disappointment and sense of doom which we experience, there is still something in us that clings to life hoping to gain happiness at some time or other. This irrepressible feeling is really a reflection, an intimation of the bliss that lies in the deepest layers of our being and is preparing to emerge when
conditions are ready. There in the depths of our heart behind the veil of nature, is the soul, a spark of the Divine holding in itself the pure Bliss inalienable from its divine nature, culturing it and urging it forward at every available opening. In fact but for this Bliss, existence itself would not be possible:

*Who could labour to draw in the breath or who could have the strength to breathe it out, if there were not that Bliss in the heaven of his heart, the ether within his being?*

(Taittiriya Upanishad, 3.7)

This is the uncaused bliss which is experienced in profound moments of inner communion or outer contact with the purer manifestations of the Spirit.

**HEAVEN AND EARTH**

*Heaven’s touch fulfils but cancels not our earth.*

(XII)

It is wrong to think that all that pertains to life on earth is foreign to the truth of God and must be abandoned if one would realise God. The earth is the intended field for the manifestation of the Glory of God and all on earth has its origin in the Being of God, whatever its present form—arrested or deformed. When one opens to the action of the
Divine Consciousness, the Yoga Shakti, these elements are lifted up and transformed into their higher, diviner terms. For one who wants to serve the Divine Truth, the way is of progressive elevation and perfection, not negation and rejection. The Divine comes to fulfil, not to cancel the human.

**BLISS**

*A giant drop of the Bliss unknowable
Overwhelmed his limbs and round his soul became
A fiery ocean of felicity.*

(II.9)

The Bliss of the Divine Being is not of the earthly kind. Human pleasure and joy have a quantitative appeal and are usually mixed in their contents. But the Bliss of the higher Spirit is always pure and intense and unique. He on whom even a drop of it trickles down, in the course of his inner quest, is liable to lose his foundations unless he has a strong base—a sound physical body, strong nerves, a vital purified of desire, a calm mind. If these be not there, there are dangers of imbalance, illness, derangement. The Bliss that overwhelms the being turns into an ecstasy unbearable and ineffable,

*The Bliss of the Eternal from which words turn back without attaining and mind also returns baffled.*

(Taittiriya Upanished, 3.9)
JOY DIVINE

A divinising stream possessed his veins,
His body’s cells awoke to spirit sense,
Each nerve became a burning thread of joy;
Tissue and flesh partook beatitude.

(III.4)

When the divine felicity pours into the being, in the course of yoga, it does not merely stay in the breast as a heavenly joy. It floods the entire system and sets it aflame in an intoxication of pure bliss. Even the physical parts are filled with this stream of higher Ananda; it is constantly felt coursing through the veins and the nerves become flaming threads of joy. The cells of the body awake with a new sense that throbs to the touch of the Spirit. Even the most material tissues and flesh begin to share in the unending beatitude. It is an overpowering possession by the Lord of Ananda, the Soma of the Vedic mystic. If the system is able to hold this charge, a great action of transmutation takes place well beyond human capability.

BLISS (I)

The murmur of our occult happiness

(II.5)

As one pursues the yogic path and becomes aware of deeper and still deeper levels of the being,
one experiences the silent throb of a secret happiness that is always present behind the veil of the uneven flow of the external life-currents. That is the first layer of the Delight of Existence that bases all creation and sustains it throughout. It is not overtly expressive in the state of ignorance in which life is presently organised; but it can be experienced and made active as one strikes the level of consciousness at which it is natural.

BLISS (II)

_The world’s senseless beauty mirrors God’s Delight_,
_The rapture’s smile is secret everywhere;
It flows in the wind’s breath, in the tree’s sap,
Its hued magnificence blooms in leaves and flowers._

(II.4)

As one awakes to the existence of this throb of delight in oneself and allows it to permeate more and more his active-consciousness, one begins to perceive the presence of the same delight in life around, in Nature, in the various movements of the universe. This Delight of God reflects itself in forms of Beauty. It flows in the rush of the wind, in the sap of the tree, in the bloom of the leaves and flowers of variegated hue. One develops the sensitivity to perceive this Delight pervading all creation.
RAPTURE

Here even the highest rapture Time can give
Is a mimicry of ungrasped beatitudes,
A mutilated statue of ecstasy.

(I.5)

The utmost pleasure or joy that the world can give is limited by the limiting nature of the causes that give rise to such sensations. As one proceeds in yoga, however, one becomes aware of a delight in oneself, in existence that is uncaused, does not depend upon any external factors to be experienced. It is the ananda that is self-existent; one finds it on the heights of one’s existence, in the secretcies of one’s being. It reveals itself as an endless ecstasy before the intensity of which the highest human joy pales into insignificance. Human joy is flawed, transient, the bliss of the soul, the Eternal, is whole, unbroken.

DIVINE ALCHEMY

Overtaken by the spirit’s sudden spell,
Smitten by a divine passion’s alchemy,
Pain’s self compelled transformed to potent joy.

(II.9)

Pain and pleasure are largely reactions of the life-force embodied in an individual frame to the
impacts of other similar life-forces or of the universal Life. They are more or less governed by habit; there is no finality about them. It is possible by exercise of will or endurance or change of poise of the governing consciousness to vary these reactions. It is a matter of actual experience in yoga that as a result of the discipline of detachment or of equality the reactions of pain and pleasure can be neutralised or modified. It can also happen that as a result of a strong impact of the higher Consciousness and by the intensity of the streaming divine Force, what normally registers as pain loses its edge in an impassioned movement of dedication and even transforms itself into a surge of joy.

PAIN

*Pain grew a trembling undertone of bliss.*

(X.1)

There is no finality about pain. It depends upon the receiving consciousness whether a particular experience is pleasurable or painful. As one develops the yogic consciousness which is not subject to the mechanical workings of nature governed by ego-desire, what normally impinges as pain changes its character. The delight of existence inherent in the soul begins to surge forward and as it establishes itself ‘pain’ is found to be only a convention of the senses. It is experienced as nothing
more than a sharp edge, a 'violent backwash' of bliss.

FLOW-OUT (I)

This bright perfection of her inner state
Poured outflowing into her outward scene,
Made beautiful dull common natural things
And action wonderful and time divine.

(VII.2)

In a dynamic life of spiritual development, the gains of sadhana, the inner discipline, do not remain bottled up within. There is a natural linking of the inner and the outer and the change and growth of consciousness communicates itself to the outer nature. The outer life reflects the inner status. Even common things of routine nature assume a new significance and they begin to play a different role in daily life. What was dull before acquires a fresh note of interest and yields unsuspected beauty. Activity becomes meaningful—both as an expression of the inner enlightenment and a means for further growth. Time ceases to be an agent of death; to the awakened consciousness it reveals itself as a rhythm of the Eternal, offering the opportunity to the soul to live and grow in its purposive movement.
FLOW-OUT (II)

Even the smallest meanest work became
A sweet or glad and growing sacrament,
An offering to the self of the great world
Or a service to the One in each and all.

(VII.2)

Work changes its character. It is no longer a mechanical exertion, utilitarian in value, high or low according to changing mental standards. Every work—big or small, important or trifling in the eyes of the world—becomes a felicitous and brightening spiritual exercise. Each becomes an occasion for the consecration and offering of one’s energies to the Divine in the universe, a conscious service to the One, the Lord who dwells in each form and in all forms. Works are turned into means for communing with and serving the Divine in the manifestation; they are no longer done with an egoistic motive for one’s own interests and hence they do not bind. Offered and executed for the Divine, works become a liberating force.

DIVINE PRESENCE

Its absence left the greatest action dull,
Its presence made the smallest seem divine.

(III.1)

Actions by themselves have little importance from the point of yogic development. It is the atti-
tude with which they are done, the consciousness that permeates them that invests them with significance. One learns to be more and more aware of the Divine Presence in and around oneself and in the measure in which one is conscious of it one's activity acquires quality. Without a living sense of that Presence the greatest actions become lifeless, with it even the smallest breathe a divine air.

**SACRAMENT**

_Even the smallest meanest work became_
_A sweet and glad and glorious sacrament,_
_An opening to the self of the great world,_
_Or a service to the One in each and all._

(VII.6)

In yoga it is not the acts by themselves, but the spirit in which the acts are performed that becomes important. With the proper attitude of consecration of works to the Divine, with a consciousness of surrender to the Divine—manifest in each and in all—seeking to confirm itself in every movement, every bit of life-activity assumes a new significance. It becomes a happy means of approach, a natural mode of adoration and worship. It turns into an opportunity for enlarging the consciousness to embrace more and more of God's world, to serve God in all through a dedicated pouring of energies.
ACTION AND REPOSE

there repose and action are the same
In the deep breast of God's supreme delight.

(II.6)

It is only in our state of ignorance, the divided state of our being that the exertion of energies and ceasing from the exertion are opposite movements that have opposite results—fatigue and rest. In the deeper state of spiritual consciousness where we realise the Bliss of God in our own being and live in it constantly, all is an outpouring of that Bliss. Whether it flows in the form of dynamic action or holds itself in a potent poise of conservation, it makes no essential difference to our consciousness; it is an existence in continuous delight of the soul.

DAWN

Each dawn opens into a larger light.

(VI.1)

Dawn, in inner life, signifies illumination. The light of the higher Consciousness opens on the aspiring being. But the action of the light is not constant in the beginning. It comes and then recedes waiting for the being to assimilate its impact. Only when the being is ready for further growth is there is another dawn, another opening into light.
There are thus a series of inner dawns, each dawn bringing with it a greater light, a larger charge of the higher Consciousness.

*She is the first in the eternal succession of the dawns that are coming,*—*Usha widens.*

(Rig. Veda 1.113.8)
Hinduism
Samitri — Aurobindo
Aurobindo — Swami Vivekananda