Chapter One

The Psychic Being
and Its Role in Sadhana

The Importance of the Psychic Change

What is meant in the terminology of the Yoga by the psychic is
the soul element in the nature, the pure psyche or divine nucleus
which stands behind mind, life and body (it is not the ego)
but of which we are only dimly aware. It is a portion of the
Divine and permanent from life to life, taking the experience
of life through its outer instruments. As this experience grows
it manifests a developing psychic personality which insisting
always on the good, true and beautiful, finally becomes ready
and strong enough to turn the nature towards the Divine. It
can then come entirely forward, breaking through the mental,
and physical screen, govern the instincts and transform the
nature. Nature no longer imposes itself on the soul, but the soul,
the Purusha, imposes its dictates on the nature.

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The soul, the psychic being, is in direct touch with the divine
Truth, but it is hidden in man by the mind, the vital being
and the physical nature (manas, prāṇa, anna of the Taittiriya
Upanishad). One may practise Yoga and get illuminations in
the mind and the reason; one may conquer power and luxuriate
in all kinds of experiences in the vital; one may establish even
surprising physical siddhis; but if the true soul-power behind
does not manifest, if the psychic nature does not come into
the front, nothing genuine has been done. In this Yoga, the
psychic being is that which opens the rest of the nature to the
ture supramental light and finally to the supreme Ananda. Mind
can open by itself to its own higher reaches; it can still itself
and widen into the Impersonal; it may too spiritualise itself in
some kind of static liberation or Nirvana; but the supramental
cannot find a sufficient base in spiritualised mind alone. If the
inmost soul is awakened, if there is a new birth out of the mere
mental, vital and physical into the psychic consciousness, then
this Yoga can be done; otherwise (by the sole power of the mind
or any other part) it is impossible. If there is a refusal of the
psychic new birth, a refusal to become the child new born from
the Mother, owing to attachment to intellectual knowledge or
mental ideas or to some vital desire, then there will be a failure
in the sadhana.

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It seems to me that you must know by this time about the psychic
being — that it is behind the veil and its consciousness also; only
a little comes out into the mind and vital and physical. When
that consciousness is not concealed, when you are aware of
your soul (the psychic being), when its feelings and aspirations
are yours, then you have got the consciousness of the psychic
being. The feelings and aspirations of the psychic being are all
turned towards truth and right consciousness and the Divine; it
is the only part that cannot be touched by the hostile forces and
their suggestions.

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Everything is dangerous in the sadhana or can be, except the
psychic change.

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That [feeling the Mother’s Presence, Love, Joy, Beauty] is one
part of the psychic experience — the other is a complete self-
giving, absence of demand, a prominence of the psychic being
by which all that is false, wrong, egoistic, contrary to the Divine
Truth, Divine Will, Divine Purity and Light is shown, falls away,
cannot prevail in the nature. With all that the increase of the psy-
chic qualities, gratitude, obedience, unselfishness, fidelity to the
ture perception, true impulse etc. that comes from the Mother
or leads to the Mother. When this side grows, then the other,
The Psychic Being and Its Role in Sadhana

The role of the Psychic in Sadhana

The contribution of the psychic being to the sadhana is: (1) love and bhakti, a love not vital, demanding and egoistic but without conditions or claims, self-existent; (2) the contact or the presence of the Mother within; (3) an unerring guidance from within; (4) a quieting and purification of the mind, vital and physical consciousness by their subjection to the psychic influence and guidance; (5) the opening up of all this lower consciousness to the higher spiritual consciousness above for its descent into a nature prepared to receive it with a complete receptivity and right attitude — for the psychic brings in everything right thought, right perception, right feeling, right attitude.

One can raise up one’s consciousness from the mental and vital and bring down the power, ananda, light, knowledge from above; but this is far more difficult and uncertain in its result, even dangerous if the being is not prepared or not pure enough. To ascend with the psychic for the purpose is by far the best way. If you are thus rising from the psychic centre, so much the better.

What you say indicates that the psychic and mental centres are in communication and through them you are able to bring down things from the higher consciousness. But you have not changed your head centre for the above-head centre or for the above-head wideness. That usually comes by a gradual rising of the consciousness first to the top of the head and then above it. But this must not be strained after or forced; it will come of itself.

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The psychic being not only helps openly, when it is strong and in front, but can govern the mind and vital and physical nature, give it the clear intimation of what is true and false, divine or undivine, right or wrong and repel all invasion of the hostile forces.

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It is true that if the consciousness remains quiet, the psychic will manifest more and more from deep inside and a clear feeling will come of what is true and spiritually right and what is wrong or untrue and with it also will come the power to throw away what is hostile, wrong or untrue.

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If the psychic is active—or in so far as it is active, there is something in it which is like an automatic test for the universal forces—warning against (not by thought so much as by an essential feeling) and rejecting what should not be, accepting and transmuting what should be.

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That is the special work of the psychic being, to receive the true things from above and to send away the false things from below.

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This is the function of the psychic—it has to work on each plane so as to help each to awaken to the true truth and the divine reality.

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You are right in thinking that this psychic attitude is your true need; it is that which can make the progress simple, happy and easy.  

Persevere; there is no reason for giving up. Let no uprising of difficulties discourage you. At the end there is victory and lasting peace.

The Psychic Deep Within

The place of the psychic is deep within the heart,—but deep within, not on the surface where the ordinary emotions are. But it can come forward and occupy the surface as well as be within,—then the emotions themselves become no longer vital things, but psychic emotions and feelings. The psychic so standing in
front can also extend its influence everywhere, to the mind for instance so as to transform its ideas or to the body so as to transform its habits and its reactions.

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The psychic being is in the heart centre in the middle of the chest (not in the physical heart, for all the centres are in the middle of the body), but it is deep behind. When one is going away from the vital into the psychic, it is felt as if one is going deep deep down till one reaches that central place of the psychic. The surface of the heart centre is the place of the emotional being; from there one goes deep to find the psychic. The more one goes, the more intense becomes the psychic happiness which you describe.

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If it was something in the heart, it must be the psychic being which is often felt as if deep down somewhere or rising out of a depth. If one goes to it, it is felt often as if one were going into a deep well.

   The shock must have been the psychic force trying to open the mental and vital lid which covers the soul.

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It is evidently the psychic — it is often seen as a deep well or abyss into which one plunges and finds no end; but here it is evidently the psychic penetrating down into all the lower planes and also rising up to the higher planes above.

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The empty condition by itself is not called samadhi — it is when one goes inside, is conscious within but not conscious of outside things. What you describe yourself as doing involuntarily is this going inside and being conscious there. It was into the psychic centre inside that you were going, the place that you saw as a luminous maidān in a former experience. When one goes there it is just this peace and sweetness that one feels and also this
sense of the Mother being there not far away or very near. So it is a very good development of the sadhana.

The Psychic and the Mental, Vital and Physical Nature

The mind, life and body are the instruments for manifestation. Of course the psychic can manifest things by itself inwardly or in its own plane, but for manifestation in the physical plane the instrumentality of the other parts is needed.

* These [questions about the transformation of the lower worlds] are questions with which we need not concern ourselves at present. To answer them would be to stimulate merely the curiosity of the mind — what is important now is to liberate the psychic from its veils and to open the mind and vital and body to the higher consciousness. Until that is done, there can be no individual transformation and so long as there is not the individual transformation what is the use of speculating about the transformation of worlds and its results?

* The soul is the witness, upholder, inmost experiencer, but it is master only in theory, in fact it is not-master, anīśā, so long as it consents to the Ignorance. For that is a general consent which implies that the Prakriti gambols about with the Purusha and does pretty well what she likes with him. When he wants to get back his mastery, make the theoretical practical, he needs a lot of tapasya to do it.

The psychic has always been veiled, consenting to the play of mind, physical and vital, experiencing everything through them in the ignorant mental, vital and physical way. How then can it be that they are bound to change at once when it just takes the trouble to whisper or say, “Let there be Light”! They have a tremendous negating power and can refuse and do refuse point-blank. The mind resists with an obstinate persistency in argument and a constant confusion of ideas, the vital with a fury
of bad will aided by the mind’s obliging reasonings on its side, the physical resists with an obstinate inertia and crass fidelity to old habit, and when they have done, the general Nature comes in and says, “What, you are going to get free from me so easily? Not if I know it,” and it besieges and throws back the old nature on you again and again as long as it can.

* You should never listen to these suggestions of unfitness or anything else that denies the possibility of progress and fulfilment. Whatever the difficulties or the slowness or periods of emptiness, keep before you the firm idea that succeed you must and will. Do not be discouraged by the time taken. There are people who have laboured for many years together thinking they were making no progress and yet finally the opening has come. The Force is there working behind the veil to remove difficulties and prepare the Adhar — if one is constant, finally the result will appear.

It does not matter with what motive you or anyone began the sadhana. There are always two elements, the psychic within which wants the Divine, and the mind, vital, physical which are pushed to enter the way through some idea, desire or feeling — it may be the feeling of vairāgya with the ordinary life, disgust of it and a desire for freedom and peace, or it may be something else, the idea of a greater knowledge or joy or calm which mind and life cannot give, or the seeking of Yoga power for one object or another. All that does not matter — for as the psychic pushes one farther on the way, these things drop away and the one longing for the Divine takes their place, or else they themselves are transformed and put in their proper place. The only thing you must be careful about is that, when the experience develops, you do not replace the first motives by Yogic ambition or desire for greatness or get misled by vital desires; but this can always be avoided if your mind knows and holds to it firmly that union with the Divine alone is the true central object of sadhana.
The Psychic Awakening

The psychic being is always there, but is not felt because it is covered up by the mind and vital; when it is no longer covered up, it is then said to be awake. When it is awake, it begins to take hold of the rest of the being, to influence it and change it so that all may become the true expression of the inner soul. It is this change that is called the inner conversion. There can be no conversion without the awakening of the psychic being.

* The experiences that are coming cannot be permanent at the beginning; they come and go and do their work and afterwards there is a permanent result. What must be permanent is the psychic awakening, the psychic condition and attitude and what you have written in your letter is an exact description of this psychic condition and psychic attitude. One has to keep this and see what happens and the Mother’s Force will do the rest.

* Let the sweetness and the happy feeling increase, for they are the strongest sign of the soul, the psychic being awake and in touch with us. Let not mistakes of thought or speech or action disturb you — put them away from you as something superficial which the Power and Light will deal with and remove. Keep to the one central thing — your soul and these higher realities it brings with it.

* That is good — the awakening of the psychic consciousness and its control over the rest is one of the most indispensable elements of the sadhana.

Living in the Psychic

The division of the being of which you speak is a necessary stage in the Yogic development and experience. One feels that there
is a twofold being, the inner psychic which is the true one and the other, the outer human being which is instrumental for the outward life. To live in the inner psychic being and in union with the Divine while the outer does the outward work, as you feel, is the first stage in Karmayoga. There is nothing wrong in these experiences; they are indispensable and normal at this stage.

If you feel no bridge between the two, it is probably because you are not yet conscious of what connects the two. There is an inner mental, an inner vital, an inner physical which connect the psychic and the external being. About this, however, you need not be anxious at present.

The important thing is to keep what you have and let it grow, to live always in the psychic being, your true being. The psychic will then in due time awaken and turn to the Divine all the rest of the nature, so that even the outer being will feel itself in touch with the Divine and moved by the Divine in all it is and feels and does.

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If it is the sense of the presence that you have, then you are living in the consciousness of the psychic centre. Thinking with the mind is good because it leads towards that but it is not in itself that living in the psychic centre.

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It is necessary [in order to be constantly aware of the psychic] to accustom oneself to do things from within, not to let the consciousness be thrown outward. If it is thrown outward, then to step back inwardly and regard the action or movement from within. Of course there must be the habit of self-offering too or turning all to the Divine.

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It [the psychic being] has to be surrendered consciously and with more and more knowledge. The psychic aspires to the Divine or answers to things divine, it is surrendered in principle, but it has
to develop its surrender in detail carrying with it the surrender of all the being.

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There are always unregenerate parts tugging people backwards and who is not divided? But it is best to put one’s trust in the soul, the spark of the Divine within and foster that till it rises into a sufficient flame.