Chapter One

Cheerfulness and Happiness

Cheerfulness

Cheerfulness is the salt of sadhana. It is a thousand times better than gloominess.

* Be more cheerful and confident. Sex and Doubt and Co. are there, no doubt, but the Divine is there also inside you. Open your eyes and look and look till the veil is rent and you see Him — or Her.

* The change noted by X evidently indicates a great progress in the vital and physical being. There is nothing spiritually wrong in being glad and cheerful, on the contrary it is the right thing. As for struggles and aspiration, struggles are really not indispensable to progress and there are many people who get so habituated to the struggling attitude that they have all the time struggles and very little else. That is not desirable. There is a sunlit path as well as a gloomy one and it is the better of the two — a path in which one goes forward in absolute reliance on the Mother, fearing nothing, sorrowing over nothing. Aspiration is needed but there can be a sunlit aspiration full of light and faith and confidence and joy. If difficulty comes, even that can be faced with a smile.

* It is that cheerfulness that we want to be always there in you. It is the happiness of the psychic that has found its way and, whatever difficulties come, is sure that it will be led forward and reach the goal. When a sadhak has that constantly, we know that he has got over the worst difficulty and that he is now firmly on the safe path.

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The cheerfulness [of joking and hilarity] is vital. I do not say that it should not be there, but there is a deeper cheerfulness, an inner sukhāsyā which is the spiritual condition of cheerfulness.

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It is an inner joy and cheerfulness that helps, but this [light joking] is merely a vital bubbling on the surface. It is all right in ordinary life, but in Yoga it merely expends the vital force for nothing.

**Humour and Seriousness**

Sense of humour? It is the salt of existence. Without it the world would have got utterly out of balance — it is unbalanced enough already — and rushed to blazes long ago.

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I am not aware that highly evolved personalities have no sense of humour or how the person can be said to be integrated when this sense is lacking; “looseness” applies only to a frivolous levity without any substance behind it. There is no law that wisdom should be something rigidly solemn and without a smile.

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Whatever seriousness is necessary must come of itself from within. To be serious outwardly by rule is not needed.

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Why on earth should people not be serious if they want? Life may be a joke, — though all do not find it so — but one can’t be laughing at it all the time. The idea seems to be that one can’t be serious unless one is either (1) in a rage, (2) discontented, (3) sad and miserable. But surely one can be serious when one is thinking or when one is looking at serious things or simply and purely when one is not laughing. And one can’t be laughing 24 hours without stopping, — the muscles of the stomach would
not stand it and even the American record makers might shy at such a test.

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What you write about X is quite correct. It is not necessary to be always serious of face or silent in doing the Yoga, but it is necessary to take the Yoga seriously and silence and inward concentration have a large place. One can’t be all the time throwing oneself outward if to go inside and meet the Divine there is one’s aim. But that does not mean that one has to be grave and gloomy all the time or gloomy a big part of the time, and I don’t suppose the sadhaks here are like that. It is X’s rhetorical way of putting his difficulty — the difficulty of a vital that wants to throw itself always outward in action and emotion while another part is dissatisfied with the result and feels that its own movement is frustrated. There are two people in him, one wanting a life of vital expansion, the other an inner life. The first gets restless because the inner life is not a life of outward expansion; the other becomes miserable because its aim is not realised. Neither personality need be thrown away in this Yoga; but the outer vital one must allow the inner to establish itself, give it the first place and consent to be only an instrument of the soul and to obey the law of the inner life. This is what X’s mind still refuses to understand; he thinks one must be either all gloomy and cold and grave or else bring the vital bubble and effervescence into the inner life. A quiet, happy and glad control of the vital by the inner being is a thing he is not able as yet to conceive.

Happiness and Contentment

Happiness in the ordinary sense is a sunlit state of the vital with or without cause. Contentment is less than happiness — joy of peace or being free from difficulty is rather a state of joyful sánti. Happiness ought not to be a state of self-satisfaction or inertia, and need not be, for one can combine happiness and aspiration. Of course there can be a state of happy inertia, but most people don’t remain satisfied with that long, they begin to
want something else. There are Yogins who are satisfied with a happy calm immobility, but that is because the happiness is a form of Ananda and in the immobility they feel the Self and its eternal calm and want nothing more.