

## Chapter Two

# Becoming Conscious in Work

### Working from Within

You must learn to act always from within — from your inner being which is in contact with the Divine. The outer should be a mere instrument and should not be allowed at all to compel or dictate your speech, thought or action.

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All should be done quietly from within — working, speaking, reading, writing as part of the real consciousness — not with the dispersed and unquiet movement of the ordinary consciousness.

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One can work and remain quiet within. Quietude does not mean having an empty mind or doing no action at all.

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When one is concentrated within, the body can go on doing its work by the Force acting within it. Even the external consciousness can work separately under the motion of the Force while the rest of the consciousness is in concentration.

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It is a little difficult at first to combine the inward condition with the attention to the outward work and mingling with others, but a time comes when it is possible for the inner being to be in full union with the Mother while the action comes out of that concentrated union and is consciously guided in all its details so that some part of the consciousness can attend to everything outside, even be concentrated upon it and yet feel the inward concentration in the Mother.

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It is a very good sign that even in spite of full work the inner working was felt behind and succeeded in establishing the silence. A time comes for the sadhak in the end when the consciousness and the deeper experience go on happening even in full work or in sleep, while speaking or in any kind of activity.

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It is probably because at the time of the work the tendency of the consciousness to externalise itself is greater (that is always the case), so the pressure grows stronger in order to produce a contrary inward tendency. This produces some tendency to go inside in the way of a complete internalisation (going into a sort of samadhi); but what should happen during work is a going inside in a wakeful condition and becoming aware of the psychic within as you used to do under the pressure while the outer mind does the work. This is the condition that must eventually come.

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The stress of the Power is all right, but there is really nothing incompatible between the inner silence and action. It is to that combination that the sadhana must move.

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It [*concentration of the inner consciousness*] can happen in several forms. It can become concentrated in silence as the witness — it can become concentrated in the feeling of the Divine Force flowing through it, the work being a result — it can become concentrated in the feeling of the presence of the Divine or the Ananda or love of the Divine while the working goes on separately in front. All this becomes so habitual that it goes on of itself without the need of call or effort or even of the mind's attention — it simply *is* there. There are other possibilities besides those mentioned above, but these are perhaps the most common.

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It is perfectly possible to do work in an entire emptiness

without any interference or activity of the lower parts of the consciousness.

### Working with a Double Consciousness

One can both aspire and attend to the work and do many other things at the same time when the consciousness is developed by Yoga.

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It [*peace and contact in work, but no aspiration*] is because the energy is put outward in the work. But as the peace and contact grow a double consciousness can develop — one engaged in the work, another behind silent and observing or turned towards the Divine — in this consciousness the aspiration can be maintained even while the external consciousness is turned towards the work.

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That is how the consciousness must work when it lives in the Divine. One part of the Force in it works and offers the work to the Mother, another part lives in the experience of the Mother, the third hears what the others say and answers without losing the inner consciousness.

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No — it is only if it [*turning inwards during work*] is an inner absorption that it would come in the way. But what I mean is a sort of stepping backward into something silent and observant within which is not involved in the action, yet sees and can shed its light upon it. There are then two parts of the being, one inner looking at and witnessing and knowing, the other executive and instrumental and doing. This gives not only freedom but power — and in this inner being one can get into touch with the Divine not through mental activity but through the substance of the being, by a certain inward touch, perception, reception, receiving also the right inspiration or intuition of the work.

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If one feels a consciousness not limited by the work, a consciousness behind supporting that which works, then it is easier [*to keep higher thoughts during work*]. That usually comes either by the wideness and silence fixing and extending itself or by the consciousness of a Force not oneself working through the worker.

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Before things become pucca in the consciousness, the doing of work does carry the consciousness outward unless one has made it a sadhana to feel the “Force greater than oneself” working through one. That I suppose is why the Shankarites considered work to be in its own nature an operation of the Ignorance and incompatible with a condition of realisation. But as a matter of fact there are three stages there: (I) in which the work brings you to a lower as well as outer consciousness so that you have afterwards to recover the realisation; (II) in which the work brings you out, but the realisation remains behind (or above), not felt while you work, but as soon as the work ceases you find it there just as it was; (III) in which the work makes no difference, for the realisation or spiritual condition remains through the work itself. You seem this time to have experienced No. II.

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In action it is always more difficult [*to keep a higher state of consciousness*] because the consciousness goes out towards the work or else is at least not wholly held within — it is therefore difficult to remain in an inward state. There is no other obstacle. But if the inward state is strong and habitual, then it gains upon the action also and at first one always feels it behind and afterwards it occupies the whole consciousness, outer included, and the action takes place in it. This is for static states like peace, self-realisation etc. If one has the realisation of the dynamic Force, there is no difficulty — because that can take up the action at once.

### Absorption in Work

It is the external mind that gets absorbed in the work and

covers what is behind. There must be a double consciousness, one acting, one behind observing, separate, free to continue the sadhana.

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The absorption in work is not undesirable — but the difficulty in turning inwards can only be temporary. A certain plasticity in the physical consciousness which is sure to come makes it easy to turn from one concentration to another.

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It [*meditative absorption during work*] depends on the plasticity of the consciousness. Some are like that, they get so absorbed they don't want to come out or do anything else. One has to keep a certain balance by which the fundamental consciousness remains able to turn from one concentration to another with ease.

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This tendency [*to be possessed by work*] has its advantage and disadvantage. It gets things done, but it prevents plasticity in the work. One must get free from the "possession" by the urge of the energy, but keep the drive and be able to distribute it at will.

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Absorption in work is inevitable. It is enough to offer it when beginning and ending and to encourage the attitude to grow = for You and by You.

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It is a certain inertia in the physical consciousness which shuts it up in the groove of what it is doing so that it is fixed in that and not free to remember [*the Mother*].

### Remembering the Presence in Work

It is not at first easy to remember the presence in work; but if one revives the sense of the presence immediately after the work is

over it is all right. In time the sense of the presence will become automatic even in work.

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All the difficulties you describe are quite natural things common to most people. It is easy for one, comparatively, to remember and be conscious when one sits quiet in meditation; it is difficult when one has to be busy with work. The remembrance and consciousness in work have to come by degrees, you must not expect to have it all at once; nobody can get it all at once. It comes in two ways,—first, if one practises remembering the Mother and offering the work to her each time one does something (not all the time one is doing, but at the beginning or whenever one can remember), then that slowly becomes easy and habitual to the nature. Secondly, by the meditation an inner consciousness begins to develop which, after a time, not at once or suddenly, becomes more and more automatically permanent. One feels this as a separate consciousness from that outer one which works. At first this separate consciousness is not felt when one is working, but as soon as the work stops one feels it was there all the time watching from behind; afterwards it begins to be felt during the work itself, as if there were two parts of oneself—one watching and supporting from behind and remembering the Mother and offering to her and the other doing the work. When this happens, then to work with the true consciousness becomes more and more easy.

It is the same with all the rest. It is by the development of the inner consciousness that all the things you speak of will be set right. For instance it is a part of the being that has *utsāha* for the work, another that feels the pressure of quietude and is not so disposed to work. Your mood depends on which comes up at the time—it is so with all people. To combine the two is difficult, but a time comes when they do get reconciled—one remains poised in an inner concentration while the other is supported by it in its push towards work. The transformation of the nature, the harmonising of all these discordant things in the being are the work of sadhana. Therefore you need not be discouraged by

observing these things in you. There is hardly anybody who has not found these things in himself. All this can be arranged by the action of the inner Force with the constant consent and call of the sadhak. By himself he might not be able to do it, but with the Divine Force working within all can be done.

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The resistance you speak of and the insufficient receptivity and the inability to continue in communion while doing work, must all be due to some part of the physical consciousness that is still not open to the Light — probably something in the vital physical and the material subconscious which stands in the way of the physical mind being in its mass free and responsive.

There is no harm in raising the aspiration from below to meet the power from above. All that you have to be careful about is not to raise up the difficulty from below before the descending Power is ready to remove it.

There is no necessity of losing consciousness when you meditate. It is the widening and change of the consciousness that is essential. If you mean going inside, you can do that without losing consciousness.

### Inner Guidance about Work

It is good that you were able to observe yourself all the time and see the movements and that the intervention of the new consciousness was frequent and automatic. At a later stage you will no doubt get a guidance in the mind also as to how to do the things you want to get done. Evidently your mind was too active — as well as the minds of others also — and so you missed your objective, owing to the excessive multitude of witnesses! However —

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If you want that [*to become conscious of whether an action is right or not*] very much and aspire for it, it may come in one of several ways —

(1) You may get the habit or faculty of watching your movements in such a way that you see the impulse to action coming and can see too its nature,

(2) a consciousness may come which feels uneasy at once if a wrong thought or impulse to action or feeling is there,

(3) something within you may warn and stop you when you are going to do the wrong action.

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As for the feeling from within, it depends on being able to go inside. Sometimes it comes of itself with the deepening of the consciousness by bhakti or otherwise; sometimes it comes by practice — a sort of referring the matter and listening for the answer — listening is of course a metaphor but it is difficult to express it otherwise — it doesn't mean that the answer comes necessarily in the shape of words, spoken or unspoken, though it does sometimes or for some; it can take any shape. The main difficulty for many is *to be sure of the right answer*. For that it is necessary to be able to contact the consciousness of the Guru inwardly — that comes best by bhakti. Otherwise it may become a delicate and ticklish job. Obstacles, (1) normal habit of relying on outward means for everything, (2) ego, substituting its suggestions for the right answer, (3) mental activity, (4) intruder nuisances. I think you need not be eager for this, but rely on the growth of the inner consciousness. The above is only by way of general explanation.

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A constant aspiration for that [*to be constantly governed by the Divine*] is the first thing — next a sort of stillness within and a drawing back from the outward action into the stillness and a sort of listening expectancy, not for a sound but for the spiritual feeling or direction of the consciousness that comes through the psychic.

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Your difficulty is that you worry yourself and think you have

made mistakes when you have made none. If you want to get the right guidance, you must have more confidence and not always think that what comes to you is wrong and your work is bad and ugly. You generally get things right. If you do make a mistake here and there, it does not matter; everybody makes some mistakes; but by making them one can learn better.

Another thing is that, as I have told you, a thing can be done in several ways, all of which are good — but your mind seems to go on the feeling that one thing is good or true and all the rest is bad or false and, as it were, is seeking for the one only good way and then in everything it does it feels dissatisfied. When you have found a way of doing the work, it is better to do it and not always be worrying yourself for something better.

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It is always the restlessness that makes you lose touch. If you are not sure about the work, remain quiet and you will get in time the idea of what to do; if you worry and are restless, you get confused and disturbed and can no longer feel connection with the Force, though it is always there above you and supporting you. As to blind selfish feelings, they are still more confusing and disturbing; but here too the only thing is to remain quiet, detach yourself, disown and throw away the feeling. To get upset, disturbed and in despair, is no use; it only prolongs the confusion and unrest and prevents you from feeling the connection.

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Openness in work means the same thing as openness in the consciousness. The same Force that works in your consciousness in meditation and clears away the cloud and confusion whenever you open to it, can also take up your action and not only make you aware of the defects in it but keep you conscious of what is to be done and guide your mind and hands to do it. If you open to it in your work, you will begin to feel this guidance more and more until behind all your activities you will be aware of the Force of the Mother.

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Why should you try the same things as the others? What one feels inspired to do, is the best thing for one.

### **Knowing the Divine Will**

There is a consciousness other than mind and vital — if there were not, there would be no use in doing sadhana. The true will belongs to that consciousness.

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When the mind is pure and the psychic prominent, then one feels what is according to the Divine Will and what is against it.

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For the actions to be psychic, the psychic must be in front. The observing Purusha can separate himself, but cannot change the Prakriti. But to be the observing Purusha is a first step. Afterwards there must be the action of the Purusha Will as an instrument of the Mother's force. This Will must be founded on a right consciousness which sees what is wrong, ignorant, selfish, egoistic, moved by desire in the nature and puts it right.

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It needs a quiet mind [*to know the Divine Will*]. In the quiet mind turned towards the Divine the intuition (higher mind) comes of the Divine's Will and the right way to do it.

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Once the mental silence is attained, then in that the mental thoughts can be replaced by some vision and intuition regarding the work.

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The transcendental Will for us is the supramental Will. For that to act in you directly, it is necessary to grow upward into the consciousness above the ordinary mind and to bring down these higher ranges into the mind, life and body. Indirectly through

the higher Mind and intuition the supramental Will is already acting on you, but naturally this indirect action does not bring the full power.

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The true automatic action (full of consciousness and light) begins only when one gets into touch with the supermind. Till then aspiration and tapasya (concentration) are needed; otherwise there is a wrong automatism due to inert passivity in which wrong forces can act.

### Freedom in Work

Do? why should he [*a certain Yogī*] want to do anything if he was in the eternal peace or Ananda or union with the Divine? If a man is spiritual and has gone beyond the vital and mind, he does not need to be always “doing” something. The self or spirit has the joy of its own existence. It is free to do nothing and free to do everything — but not because it is bound to action and unable to exist without it.

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The passage<sup>1</sup> describes the state of consciousness when one is aloof from all things even when in their midst and all is felt to be unreal, an illusion. There are then no preferences or desires, because things are too unreal to desire or to prefer one to another. But at the same time one feels no necessity to flee the world or not to do any action, because being free from the illusion, action or living in the world does not weigh upon one, one is not bound or involved. Those who flee from the world or shun action (the Sannyasis) do so because they would be involved or bound; they believe the world to be unreal, but in fact it weighs on them as a reality so long as they are in it. When one is perfectly free from the illusion of the reality of things, then they cannot weigh on one or bind at all.

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<sup>1</sup> *This passage is not available. — Ed.*

But the Jivanmukta feels no bondage [*in work*]. In all work and action, he feels perfectly free, because the work is not done by him personally (there is no sense of limited ego) but by the cosmic Force. The limitations of the work are those put by the cosmic Force itself on its own action. He himself lives in communion of oneness with the Transcendent which is above the cosmos and feels no limitation. That is at least how it is felt in the Overmind.