

Chapter Three

The Divine Force in Work

Receiving the Divine Power or Force

To be able to receive the Divine Power and let it act through you in the things of the outward life, there are three necessary conditions:

1. Quietude, equality — not to be disturbed by anything that happens, to keep the mind still and firm, seeing the play of forces, but itself tranquil.

2. Absolute faith — faith that what is for the best will happen, but also that if one can make oneself a true instrument, the fruit will be that which one's will guided by the Divine Light sees as the thing to be done — *kartavyam karma*.

3. Receptivity — the power to receive the Divine Force and to feel its presence and the presence of the Mother in it and allow it to work, guiding one's sight and will and action. If this power and presence can be felt and this plasticity made the habit of the consciousness in action, — but plasticity to the Divine Force alone without bringing in any foreign element, — the eventual result is sure.

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What happened to you shows what are the conditions of that state in which the Divine Power takes the place of the ego and directs the action, making the mind, life and body an instrument. A receptive silence of the mind, an effacement of the mental ego and the reduction of the mental being to the position of a witness, a close contact with the Divine Power and an openness of the being to that one Influence and no other are the conditions for becoming an instrument of the Divine, moved by that and that only.

That there was no mental expectation was all to the good; if there had been an expectation, the mind might have been active

and interfered and either prevented the experience or else stood in the way of its being pure and complete.

The silence of the mind does not of itself bring in the supramental consciousness; there are many states or planes or levels of consciousness between the human mind and the Supermind. The silence opens the mind and the rest of the being to greater things, sometimes to the cosmic consciousness, sometimes to the experience of the silent Self, sometimes to the presence or power of the Divine, sometimes to a higher consciousness than that of the human mind; the mind's silence is the most favourable condition for any of these things to happen. In this Yoga it is the most favourable condition (not the only one) for the Divine Power to descend first upon and then into the individual consciousness and there do its work to transform that consciousness, giving it the necessary experiences, altering all its outlook and movements, leading it from stage to stage till it is ready for the last (supramental) change.

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What happened is a thing that often happens and — taking your account of it — it reproduced in your case the usual stages. First you sat down in prayer — that means a call to the Above, if I may so express it. Next came the necessary condition for the answer to the prayer to be effective — “little by little a sort of restfulness came”, in other words, the quietude of the consciousness which is necessary before the Power that has to act can act. Then the rush of the Force or Power, “a flood of energy and sense of power and glow” and the natural concentration of the being in inspiration and expression, the action of the Power. This is the thing that used to happen daily to the physical workers in the Asram. Working with immense energy and enthusiasm, with a passion for the work they might after a time feel tired — then they would call the Mother and a sense of rest came into them and with or after it a flood of energy so that twice the amount of work could be done without the least fatigue or reaction. In many there was a spontaneous call of the vital for the Force, so that they felt the flood of energy as soon as they began the work

and it continued so long as the work had to be done.

The vital is the means of effectuation on the physical plane, so its action and energy are necessary for all work — without it, if the mind only drives without the cooperation and instrumentation of the vital, there is hard and disagreeable labour and effort with results which are usually not at all of the best kind. The ideal state for work is when there is a natural concentration of the consciousness in the special energy, supported by an easeful rest and quiescence of the consciousness as a whole. Distraction of the mind by other activities disturbs this balance of ease and concentrated energy, — fatigue also disturbs or destroys it. The first thing therefore that has to be done is to bring back the supporting restfulness and this is ordinarily done by cessation of work and repose. In the experience you had that was replaced by a restfulness that came from above in answer to your station of prayer and an energy that also came from above. It is the same principle as in sadhana — the reason why we want people to make the consciousness quiet so that the higher peace may come in and on the basis of that peace a new Force from above.

It is not effort that brought the inspiration. Inspiration comes from above in answer to a state of concentration which is itself a call to it. Effort on the contrary fatigues the consciousness and therefore is not favourable to the best work; the only thing is that sometimes — by no means always — effort culminates in a pull for the inspiration which brings some answer, but it is not usually so good and effective an inspiration as that which comes when there is the easy and intense concentration of the energy in its work. Effort and expenditure of energy are not necessarily the same thing; the best expenditure of energy is that which flows easily without effort at all — when the Inspiration or Force (any Force) works of itself and the mind and vital and even body are glowing instruments and the Force flows out in an intense and happy working — an almost labourless labour.

The Working of the Force

When you have opened yourself to a higher Force, when you

have made yourself a channel for the energy of its work, it is quite natural that the Force should flow and act in the way that is wanted or the way that is needed and for the effect that is needed. Once the channel is made, the Force that acts is not necessarily bound by the personal limitations or disabilities of the instrument; it can disregard them and act in its own power. In doing so it may use the instrument simply as a medium and, as soon as the work is finished, leave him just what he was before, incapable in his ordinary moments of doing such good work, capable only when he is seized and used and illumined. But also it may by its power of transforming action set the instrument right, accustom it to the necessary intuitive knowledge and movement so that this living perfected instrument can at will call for and receive the action of the Force. In technique, there are two different things, — there is the intellectual knowledge which one has acquired and applies or thinks one is applying — there is the intuitive cognition which acts in its own right, even if it is not actually possessed by the worker so that he cannot give an adequate account of the modes of working or elements of what he has done. Many poets have a very summary theoretic knowledge of metrical or linguistic technique; they have its use but they would not be able to explain how they write or what are the qualities and constituent methods of their successful art, but they achieve all the same things that are perfect in the weaving of sounds and the skill of words, consummate in rhythm and language. Intellectual knowledge of technique is a help but a minor help; it can become a mere device or a rigid fetter. It is an intuitive divination of the right process that is more frequent and a more powerful action — or even it is an inspiration that puts the right sounds or right words without need of even any intuitive choice. This is especially true of poetry, for there are arts — those that work in a more material substance — where perfect work cannot be done without full technical knowledge, — painting, sculpture, architecture.

What the higher Force writes through you is your own in the sense that you have been an instrument of manifestation — as is indeed every artist or worker. When you put your name to

it, it is the name of the instrumental creator; but for sadhana it is necessary to recognise that the real Power, the true Creator was not your surface self, you were simply the living harp on which the Musician played his tune.

The true Ananda of creation is not the pleasure of the ego in having personally done well and in being somebody, that is an extraneous element which attaches itself to the true joy of work and creation. The Ananda comes by the inrush of a larger Might and Delight, *āveśa*; there is the thrill of being possessed and used by a superpersonal Power, the exultation and exaltation of the uplifting of the consciousness, the joy of its illumination and its heightened and heightened action and the joy of the beauty, power or perfection that is being created. How far, how intensely one feels these things, depends on the condition of the consciousness at the time, the temperament, the activity of the vital, the mind's receptivity and response. The Yogi (or even certain strong and calm minds) is not carried away, as the mind and the vital often are, by the Ananda, — he holds and watches it and there is no mere excitement mixed with the divine flow of it through the conscious instrument and the body. There is a greater Ananda of *samarpaṇa*, of spiritual realisation or divine love, but in the spiritual consciousness and life the Ananda of creation has its place.

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To observe whether it [*one's work*] is really well done or not and feel the Ananda of work done for the Mother [*is the right attitude*]. Get rid of the "I". If it is well done, it is the Force that did it and your only part was to be a good or a bad instrument.

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It is a Force that comes and pushes to work and is as legitimately a part of the spiritual life as others. It is a special Energy that takes hold of the worker in the being and fulfils itself through him. To work with a full energy like this in one is quite salutary. The only thing is not to overdo it — that is to avoid any exhaustion or recoil to a fatigued inertia.

As for the dedication make the *sankalpa* always of offering it, remember and pray when you can (I mean in connection with the work). This is to fix a certain attitude. Afterwards, the Force can take advantage of this key to open the deeper dedication within.

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I was not [*in using the phrase “allow the Force to work through you”*] speaking of the Force coming down from above, but of the Force from behind doing action through the mind and body as instruments. Very often when the mind and body are inert, their actions still go on by this push from behind.

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You used the Force for the work, and it supported you so long as you preferred to stick to that work. What is of first importance is not the religious or non-religious character of the work done, but the inner attitude in which it is done. If the attitude is vital and not psychic, then one throws oneself out in the work and loses the inner contact. If it is psychic, the inner contact remains, the Force is felt supporting or doing the work and the sadhana progresses.

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The Force from above is the Force of the Higher Consciousness. That from behind works as a mental, vital or physical force according to need. When the being is open to it and there is a certain passivity to its working, it takes the place of the personal activity and the Person is a witness of its action.

The Force and the Peace in Action

The dynamic action when it comes acts without disturbing the silence and peace. There is the vast peace and silence and in that the Force or the Will works to do what is necessary — in that also is the action of Agni or the psychic.

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It is this quiet and spontaneous action that is the characteristic divine action. The aggressive action is only, as you say, when there is resistance and struggle. This does not mean that the quiet force cannot be intense. It can be more intense than the aggressive, but its intensity only increases the intensity of the peace.

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When you feel the better condition, the peace and force at work, it is better to allow the force to work, keeping yourself still and quiet, and not try to do things by the mind.

When there is the confusion or wrong condition, then you have to call down the quiet, to try to get back to the true position, not listening to the wrong thoughts but rejecting them. If you cannot do that at once, still remain as quiet as possible and aspire and offer yourself. The Divine Force can always do more than the personal effort; so the one thing is to get quiet and call it down or back to the front — for it is always there behind or above you.

Drawing upon the Force for Energy

During the course of the sadhana one can learn to draw upon the universal Life-Force and replenish the energies from it. But usually the best way is to learn to open oneself to the Mother's Force and become conscious of it supporting and moving or pouring into the system and giving the energy needed for the work whether it be mental, vital or physical.

There is naturally a higher Energy above the present universal forces and it is that which will transform the nature and take up the mental, vital, physical energies and change them into its own likeness.

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If you mean by failure the weakness of the body, it is due probably to your having unduly strained it in obedience to rajasic vital impulses, an effect which was increased by vital relapses

into *tamas* and the struggle of the vital attacks you had. But also it often happens even in the ordinary course of Yoga that physical strength is replaced by a Yogic strength or Yogic life force which keeps up the body and makes it work, but in the absence of this force the body is denuded of power, inert and *tamasic*. This can only be remedied by the whole being opening to Yoga *shakti* in each of its planes — Yogic mind force, Yogic life force, Yogic body force.

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When doing this work you had the Force in you and the right consciousness filling the vital and physical — afterwards with relaxation the ordinary physical consciousness came up and brought back the ordinary reactions — fatigue, sciatica etc.

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With the right consciousness always there, there would be no fatigue.

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It [*the cause of fatigue*] is probably some desire or vital preference — likes and dislikes in the vital. All work given you must be felt as the Mother's and done with joy, opening yourself for the Mother's force to work through you.

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If there is the full surrender in the work and you feel it is the Mother's and that the Mother's force is working in you, then fatigue does not come.

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The pain, burning, restlessness, weeping and inability to work which you feel, come when there is some difficulty or resistance in some part of the nature. When it comes call on the Mother and reject these things; turn to her for the peace and quietude to return to your mind and settle in the heart, so that there shall be no place for these other things.

Avoiding Overstrain

Yes, it is a mistake to overstrain as there is a reaction afterwards. If there is energy, all must not be spent, some must be stored up so as to increase the permanent strength of the system.

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Overstraining brings inertia up. Everybody has inertia in his nature: the question is of its greater or lesser operation.

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When you feel tired, don't overstrain yourself but rest — doing only your ordinary work; restlessly doing something or other all the time is not the way to cure it. To be quiet without and within is what is needed when there is this sense of fatigue. There is always a strength near you which you can call in and it will remove these things, but you must learn to be quiet in order to receive it.

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If the physical is in this condition and the work creates such reactions in it, it is no use forcing it violently and putting an overstrain upon it. It is better to educate and train the external material being slowly by bringing calm and peace and light and strength persistently into the nervous system and cells of the body. A violent compulsion on the body may well defeat its own object. Probably your sadhana has been too exclusively internal and subjective; but if it is so, this cannot be remedied in a moment. It is better therefore for you not to do heavy physical work like the Bakery's at present.

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Idleness must of course go — but sometimes I think you have pulled too much the other way. To be able to work with full energy is necessary — but to be able not to work is also necessary.

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As for working, it depends on what you mean by the word. Desire often leads either to excess of effort, meaning often much labour and a limited fruit, with strain, exhaustion and in case of difficulty or failure despondence, disbelief or revolt; or else it leads to pulling down the force. That can be done, but except for the Yogically strong and experienced, it is not always safe, though it may be often very effective; not safe, first, because it may lead to violent reactions or bring down contrary or wrong or mixed forces which the sadhak is not experienced enough to distinguish from the true ones. Or else it may substitute the sadhak's own limited power of experience or mental and vital constructions for the free gift and the true leading of the Divine. Cases differ, each has his own way of sadhana. But for you what I would recommend is constant openness, a quiet steady aspiration, no over-eagerness, a cheerful trust and patience.

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To work all the time is excessive, unless there is need — but the impulse to work in itself is good.

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If too much work is done, the quality of the work often deteriorates in spite of the zest of the workers.