

## Chapter Four

# Time and Change of the Nature

### Time Needed for Change

The change of the nature cannot take place in a few days. It is a constant progressive movement.

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The change of the lower consciousness (vital and physical) is a big work and takes a long time and much action of the higher forces to accomplish. Nobody has ever done it in a short time.

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That is nonsense — no one can get free from the lower nature in such a short time [*eight or nine months*]. It takes years for even the greatest Yogis — it is the work of a life-time.

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As I have constantly told you, you cannot expect all to be enlightened at once. Even the greatest Yogis can only proceed by stages and it is only at the end that the whole nature shares the true consciousness which they first establish in the heart or behind it or in the head or above it. It descends or expands slowly conquering each layer of the being one after the other, but each step takes time.

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All comes in its time. One has to go on quietly and steadily increasing the higher consciousness till it takes possession of the vital and physical parts.

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I want you to be open and in contact with the Peace and Presence and Force. All else will come if that is there and then one need not

be troubled by the time it takes in the *péripéties* of the sadhana.

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It is no doubt the pressure of the psychic in you which you express in the letter. That is how the psychic being wants it to be. But it is a mistake to accept any suggestion of self-distrust or incapacity on the ground that it is not like that yet or is not always like that. These things always take time; even after they have begun, they always take time. It is impossible to expect from the mixed and confused nature of the human being that it should be constantly in a state of ardent aspiration, perfect faith and love or full and constant openness to the Divine Force. There is the mental with its limited knowledge and its hesitations, there is the vital with its desires, unwillingnesses and its struggles; there is the physical with its obscurity, slowness and inertia. Even to clear the field sufficiently for a beginning of experience is usually a very long labour. But afterwards if the peace begins or any other right condition, it comes and stays for a time — then what is left of the lower nature surges up on some excuse or with no excuse and veils the condition. Peace and opening may come so strongly that it seems all difficulties are gone and can never return — but that is only an indication, a promise. It shows that it will be so when the peace and opening are irrevocably settled in all the nature. For that what is needed is perseverance — to go on without discouragement, recognising that the process of the nature and the action of the Mother's force is working through the difficulty even and will do all that is needed. Our incapacity does not matter — there is no human being who is not in his parts of nature incapable — but the Divine Force also is there. If one puts one's trust in that, incapacity will be changed into capacity. Difficulty and struggle themselves then become a means towards the achievement.

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I repeat what I wrote in the morning that the one thing to be seen is whether there is the true yearning for the Divine or, to put it more strongly, whether that is the one thing that really matters to

the being. If there is that, then all other considerations become minor or irrelevant: what is happening in the world or how others react to the search for the Divine or how long the search takes. One must be prepared to give one's whole lifetime and one's whole self to that and count all well spent for the one only and supreme object. When the Divine is a necessity of the being, what is the use of mental questionings as to whether He exists or what He is like, kind or cruel, slow or swift in response, easy to reach or hard to discover? He appears all or any of these things to different seekers, but to all He is the one necessity of their existence. If one finds Him quickly, so much the better; if it takes long, still one has to go on seeking till one finds. One may have hard moments of anguish or despair because the human vital is weak, but still one goes on because the soul insists. But there is no logic in the position that because my need of the Divine is entire and even in six years I have not got Him, therefore the proper thing to do is to despair and give up. The logical position is, my need for the Divine is entire, so I must go on till I find Him, however long it may take, whether one year or six or twelve; for if my need is entire and persists always, I cannot fail to arrive. That is the position that is taken by the spiritual seeker and it is the true and natural one. It is no use saying that you are unfit and cannot take it; you have to come to it, if your need is true and entire.

The misery of the world or the activity of the Asuras is also irrelevant. Nobody has ever contended that this is a happy and perfect world, nobody in India at least, or the best possible world or put that forth as a proof of the Divine Existence. It is known that it is a world of death, ignorance, suffering and that its pleasures are not enduring. The spiritual seeker takes that not as a disproof of the Divine Existence, but as a greater spur for seeking and finding it out. He may seek it as a means of escape from life and entry into Nirvana or moksha or Goloka, Brahmaloaka or Vaikuntha; he may seek the divine Self and its peace or Ananda behind existence and if he attains to that and is satisfied with it he can move through the world untouched by its vicissitudes and troubles; or he may seek it, as I have done, for the

base of a greater and happier life to be brought now or hereafter into the world-existence. But whatever be the aim, the actual state of the world is no argument at all against the seeking for the Divine or the truth of Yoga. Also the accidents of the search, that A is dead and will attain only in another body or B is ill or C misbehaves are side matters altogether. It makes no difference to one's own entire need of the Divine and the necessity of persevering in one's seeking till one finds and reaches.

My words about the great secret of sadhana<sup>1</sup> simply pointed out that that was the most effective way if one could get the things done by the Power behind, did not rule out mental effort so long as one could not do that. Ramakrishna's way of putting it was the image of the baby monkey and baby cat; I have only said the same thing in other words; both are permissible methods, only one is more easily effective. Any method sincerely and persistently followed can end by bringing the opening. You yourself chose the method of prayer and japa because you believed in that, and I acquiesced because it does prepare something in the consciousness and, if done with persistent faith and bhakti, it can open all the doors. Another method is concentration and aspiration in the heart which opens the inner emotional being. Another is the concentration in the head of which I spoke which opens the inner mind or opens the passage through the Brahmarandhra to the higher consciousness. These things are no fantastic invention of mine which one can dismiss as a new-fangled and untested absurdity; they are recognised methods which have succeeded in thousands of cases and here also there are plenty who have found their effect. But whatever method is used will not bring its effect at once; it must be done persistently, simply, directly till it succeeds. If it is done with a mind of doubt or watching it as an experiment to see if it succeeds or if it is continually crossed by a spirit of hasty despondency saying constantly, "You see it is all useless," then it ought to be obvious that the opening will be

<sup>1</sup> "That is a great secret of sadhana, to know how to get things done by the Power behind or above instead of doing all by the mind's effort." Letters on Yoga — II, volume 29 of THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO, p. 215.

very difficult, because there is that clogging it every time there is a pressure or a push to open. That is why I wanted you to get rid of these two things and have harped on that so much, because I know by my own experience and that of others how strongly they can stand in the way of what you seek. For you are not the only one who have been troubled by these two obstacles; most have had to struggle against them. If one can get rid of them in their central action, the survival of their activity in the circumference does not so much matter; for then the opening becomes possible, both to make and to keep and the rest can follow.

The six years of which you speak have been spent by you mainly in struggling with sex and doubt and vital difficulties — many take more than that time about it. What I have been wanting you to do now is to get the right positive attitude within at the centre free from these things. Its basis must be what I have said, “I want the Divine and the Divine only; since I want and need, I shall surely arrive, however long it takes, and till I do, I shall persist and endure with patience and courage.” I do not mean by that that you should have no activity but prayer and concentration; few can do that; but whatever is done should be done in that spirit.

### **Freedom from the Past**

Do not let the things of the past trouble you. Leave them behind and prepare yourself for a new being.

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To be no longer bound by the past or by surface formations is always a great step in advance.

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There is no need to give up entirely what you had in the past. Spiritual truths are not warring enemies — they are parts of a single truth and complete each other. It is only the mind that turns them into disputants and wants one to bar out another. That is

the weakness of making something in the past the standard by which you judge the present — the mind takes advantage of its own limitations to declare that the two are incompatible. But it is not so in reality — between two truths of the Divine there is always a reconciliation when to the limiting mind they seem opposites; as one is realised after the other, their unity appears, it is not necessary to deny the past experience in order to go forward to the new realisation.

This will before long become apparent to you if you do not allow the mind to stand in the way of the heart's permanent opening. Let the doors of the heart swing open freely — allow yourself to enter into the stream without making any mental conditions before you plunge in; the stream itself will carry you to your goal.

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So long as you have not learned the lesson the past had to teach you, it comes back on you. Notice carefully what kind of remembrances come, you will see that they are connected with some psychological movements in you that have to be got rid of. But you must be prepared to recognise all that was not right in you and is still not corrected, not allow any vanity or self-righteousness to cloud your vision.

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The past actions do count so long as the man does not change.

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It is not a question of pardon or punishment. The past can be effaced, but only if it is sincerely rejected from within and repaired and atoned for by a change which gets rid of the movements that caused it. A merely external submission, punishment or pardon are of no use. Otherwise the past prolongs itself into the present and the future. To get rid of the self-justifying mind and the mixture of motives in the vital is what would prevent that and give the psychic being a chance.

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The past can be abolished — on condition that nothing of it is allowed to continue in the present.

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You ask how you can repair the wrong you seem to have done. Admitting that it is as you say, it seems to me that the reparation lies precisely in this, in making yourself a vessel for the Divine Truth and the Divine Love. And the first steps towards that are a complete self-consecration and self-purification, a complete opening of oneself to the Divine, rejecting all in oneself that can stand in the way of the fulfilment. In the spiritual life there is no other reparation for any mistake, none that is wholly effective. At the beginning one should not ask for any other fruit or results than this internal growth and change — for otherwise one lays oneself open to severe disappointments. Only when one is free, can one free others and in Yoga it is out of the inner victory that there comes the outer conquest.

### **The Past and the Future**

One cannot go back to the past, one has always to go in the future.

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The past has not to be kept, — one has to go into the future realisation. All that is necessary in the past for the future will be taken up and given a new form.

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It is always preferable to have one's face turned towards the future than towards the past.

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Yes — one should always have one's look turned forwards to the future — retrospection is seldom healthy as it turns one towards a past consciousness.

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Take with you the peace and quietude and joy and keep it by remembering always the Divine.

If the thoughts about the past and the future come merely as memories and imaginations, they are of no use and you should quietly turn away your mind from them back to the Divine and to the Yoga. If they are anything to the purpose, then refer them to the Divine, put them in the light of the Truth, so that you may have the truth about them or the right decision or formation for the future, if any decision is needed.

There is no harm in the tears of which you speak, — they come from the soul, the psychic being, and are a help and not a hindrance.