Chapter Two

The Psychic Opening

The Meaning of Psychic Opening

The psychic in the ignorant human being is always behind a veil and can act on the mind or vital but not in its own power, for that is limited and obscured by the instruments. A psychic opening means the removal of the veil and the increasingly direct action of the psychic.

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The present nature is ignorant and full of wrong actions and reactions. But there is a being within you, the psychic, which answers to the Truth and not to the Ignorance. If one turns to the Divine and becomes open, then this psychic being shows itself and gives to the nature the true thoughts, feelings, will, action. This is the first change to be made.

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What you feel is the true psychic opening and it is that for which you should always aspire and reject other things until it becomes your normal base of consciousness. Once that is there, it is possible to call down through it a strength from above which will make the vital strong and remove the weakness. Your sadhana is still too mental and therefore difficult and slow; it is the psychic opening that makes a more satisfying and rapid progress possible.

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It does not matter if strenuous meditation leads to experiences or not. Remember what I told you that it is the psychic growth and not experiences that are the road for you just now. That means three things — 1st, the drawing back from the vital ego and its perturbations to a quiet attitude of faith and surrender; 2nd, the
growth of something within that sees what is to be changed in
the nature and gives the impulse to change it; 3rd, the psychic
feeling in sadhana which presses towards the growth of bhakti,
feels it a joy simply to think, feel, write, speak of, remember
the Divine, grows full of a quiet self-upliftment towards the
Divine and lives in that more than in outward things. When the
consciousness is full of these things altogether, i.e. when there
is the full psychic state or opening, then experiences begin to
come of themselves. The first two at least had started of them-
seves in you — let them grow and the third should necessarily
follow. The psychic opening first, the higher consciousness and
its experiences afterwards.

* What you desire about the self-giving free from demand is sure
to fulfil itself when there is the full opening of the psychic.

* X has been always like that. It is the activity of his mind which
is very restless; sometimes he gets a psychic opening and is all
right, then the mind comes across and he becomes confused and
miserable. Going away will not cure him; “thinking over things”
will only make him more confused and lost. He is a man who
can be rescued from all that only by a complete and permanent
psychic opening, through the heart not the mind.

Conditions for the Psychic Opening

It is good that you go back from this struggle towards the quiet
foundation that helps the opening. All this struggling and con-
fusion and harassing self-depreciation is the old wrong way of
proceeding; it is mental and vital and cannot succeed; it is in
the quiet mind that the opening must come. Then the psychic
being, the soul in you, begins to come forward. The soul knows
and sees the Truth; the mind and vital do not — until they are
enlightened by the soul’s knowledge.

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Then only can the psychic being fully open when the sadhaka has got rid of the mixture of vital motives with his sadhana and is capable of a simple and sincere self-offering to the Mother. If there is any kind of egoistic turn or insincerity of motive, if the Yoga is done under a pressure of vital demands, or partly or wholly to satisfy some spiritual or other ambition, pride, vanity or seeking after power, position or influence over others or with any push towards satisfying any vital desire with the help of the Yogic force, then the psychic cannot open, or opens only partially or only at times and shuts again because it is veiled by the vital activities; the psychic fire fails in the strangling vital smoke. Also, if the mind takes the leading part in the Yoga and puts the inner soul into the background, or, if the bhakti or other movements of the sadhana take more of a vital than of a psychic form, there is the same inability. Purity, simple sincerity and the capacity of an unegoistic unmixed self-offering without pretension or demand are the conditions of an entire opening of the psychic being.

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If desire is rejected and no longer governs the thought, feeling or action and there is the steady aspiration of an entirely sincere self-giving, the psychic usually after a time opens of itself.

An Experience of Psychic Opening

It was certainly an experience and as X very accurately described it an experience of great value, a psychic experience par excellence. A feeling of velvety softness within — an *ineffable plasticity within* is a psychic experience and can be nothing else. It means a modification of the substance of the consciousness especially in the vital emotional part, and such a modification prolonged or repeated till it became permanent would mean a great step in what I call the psychic transformation of the being. It is just these modifications in the inner substance that make transformation possible. Farther, it was a modification that made a beginning of knowledge possible — for by knowledge
we mean in Yoga not thought or ideas about spiritual things but psychic understanding from within and spiritual illumination from above. Therefore the first result was this feeling “that there was no ignominy in not understanding it, that the true understanding would come only when one realised that one was completely impotent”. This was itself a beginning of true understanding, a psychic understanding, something felt within which sheds a light or brings up a spiritual truth that mere thinking would not have given, also a truth that is effective bringing both the enlightenment and solace you needed — for what the psychic being brings with it always is light and happiness, an inner understanding and relief and solace.

Another very promising aspect of this experience is that it came as an immediate response to an appeal to the Divine. You asked for the understanding and the way out and at once Krishna showed you both — the way out was the change of the consciousness within, the plasticity which makes the knowledge possible and also the understanding of the condition of mind and vital in which the true knowledge or power of knowledge could come. For the inner knowledge comes from within and above (whether from the Divine in the heart or from the Self above) and for it to come the pride of the mind and vital in the surface mental ideas and their insistence on them must go. One must know that one is ignorant before one can begin to know. This shows that I was not wrong in pressing for the psychic opening as the only way out. For as the psychic opens, such responses and much more also become common and the inner change also proceeds by which they are made possible.

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What was meant [by “plasticity within”], I suppose, was the psychic plasticity which makes surrender possible along with a free openness to the Divine working from above — plasticity within as opposed to the rigidity which insists on maintaining one’s own ideas, feelings, habitual ways of consciousness as opposed to the higher things from above or from the psychic within.
The Psychic Opening and the Inner Centres

There is no doubt that the inner being and the psychic in you are opening and that the psychic is influencing all including the physical centre.

As to the centres. The psychic is placed behind the heart-lotus, the centre of the emotional being, the Anahata chakra — it is therefore the opening of the Anahata that is most important for the unveiling of the psychic. The Manipura (navel centre) and the Swadhisthana below it are the seats of the vital being, the Muladhara is the seat of the physical. The opening of the Manipura gives one the free play of the inner vital consciousness and it is very helpful, no doubt, for the influence of the psychic on the vital, but it is not the direct or first condition of the psychic opening itself. But so also the opening of the higher centres is helpful for the influence of the psychic on the mental being. All the centres have to open, because otherwise the inner consciousness is not opened out and liberated to its full working in all its parts.

There is however no invariable rule as to the order of the opening. By concentration on the heart centre that can open first liberating the psychic action, which is veiled by the emotional, into free play. In many there is first some opening of the vital centre and for a long time there is an abundant but unpurified play of experiences on the vital plane. In the Tantric discipline there is a process of opening all the centres from the Muladhara upward. In our Yoga very often the Power descends from above and opens the Ajnachakra first, then the others in order. But it is perhaps the safest to open by concentration the heart-lotus first so as to have the psychic influence from the beginning.

The psychic cannot lose its consciousness in the enjoyment of experiences; when it is in free action, it has the unfailing discrimination of which you speak. It has besides no push to outward enjoyment, though it has Ananda. It is the vital that is carried away by enjoyment and carries away with it the mind and other lower parts — and it can also cover up the psychic; but then what happens is not that the psychic loses its own
consciousness, which is impossible, but that the sadhak loses for the time being the full possession of the psychic consciousness. But it can always be recovered by a rectification of the wrong movement. But if one lives firmly in the psychic, there is not much danger of this aberration. What one must not do is to throw oneself out into the mind and vital; one must live within and from there command one’s experience.

“Opening” and “Coming in Front”

In using the expression “opening of the psychic” I was thinking not of an ordinary psychic opening producing some amount of psychic (as opposed to vital) love and bhakti, but of what is called the coming in front of the psychic. When that happens one is aware of the psychic being with its simple spontaneous self-giving and feels its increasing direct control (not merely a veiled or half-veiled influence) over mind, vital and physical. Especially there is the psychic discernment which at once lights up the thoughts, emotional movements, vital pushes, physical habits and leaves nothing there obscure, substituting the right movements for the wrong ones. It is this that is difficult and rare, more often the discernment is mental and it is the mind that tries to put all in order. In that case, it is the descent of the higher consciousness through the mind that opens the psychic, instead of the psychic opening directly.

* Nobody said it [the opening of the psychic] must be done necessarily from above. Naturally it is done direct and is most effective then. But when it is found difficult to do direct, as it is in certain natures, then the change begins from above, and the consciousness descending from there has to liberate the heart centre. As it acts on the heart centre, the psychic action becomes more possible.

* The direct opening of the psychic centre is easy only when
the ego-centricity is greatly diminished and also if there is a strong bhakti for the Mother. A spiritual humility and sense of submission and dependence is necessary.