

Chapter Three

Vigilance, Resolution, Will and the Divine Help

The Need of Vigilance

One is always open [*to the surrounding atmosphere*] so long as there is not the final change. If things do not come in it is because the consciousness is vigilant or the psychic in front; but the least want of vigilance or relaxation can allow something to enter.

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It [*the experience of liberation*] is likely to be fundamental and definite. But in these matters, even after the liberation one has to remain vigilant — for often these things go out and remain at a far distance waiting to see if under any circumstances, in any condition they can make a rush and recover their kingdom. If there has been an entire purification down to the depths and nothing is there to open the gate, then they cannot do it. But it is only after one has been a long time free that one can say, “Now it is all right for ever.”

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As for your inner attitude, it must remain the same. Not to be excited or drawn outwards by these “incidents” of the outward life or by the coming in of new elements is the rule; they must come in like waves into an untroubled sea and mix in it and become themselves untroubled and serene.

Your present attitude and condition is all that it should be, — only you must remain vigilant always. For when the condition is good, the lower movements have a habit of subsiding and become quiescent, hiding as it were, — or they go out of the nature and remain at a distance. But if they see that the sadhak is losing his vigilance, then they slowly begin to rise or draw

near, most often unseen, and when he is quite off his guard, surge up suddenly or make a sudden irruption. This continues until the whole nature, mental, vital, physical down to the very subconscious is enlightened, conscious, full of the Divine. Till that happens, one must always remain watchful in a sleepless vigilance.

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It is perhaps that the attitude you took of going on with the calm within and slowly changing what had to be changed, postponing certain things for the future, — though not a wrong attitude in itself, — made you somewhat lax, allowing things to play on the surface (desires etc.), which should have been kept in check. This relaxation may have opened the way for the old movements to rise through this part which was not yet ready to change at all and the hostile forces finding you off your guard took the opportunity to push the attack home. They are always vigilant for an opportunity and there must be a sufficient vigilance on the sadhak's side to refuse it to them. It is also possible that as the Force descending in the general atmosphere has carried in it some pressure on the consciousness of the sadhaks to be more ready, more awake, less engrossed in the movements of the ordinary nature than they are now, it fell upon this part and the resistance in it, which was mostly passive for a long time, became suddenly active under the pressure.

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There is no reason for despondency; when one has progressed as far as you did, that is, so far as to feel and maintain the calm and have so much of the psychic discrimination and the psychic feeling, one has no right to despair of one's spiritual future. You could not yet carry out the discrimination into an entire psychic change, because a large part of the outer physical consciousness still took some pleasure in old movements and therefore their roots remained alive in the subconscious. When you were off your guard the whole thing rose up and there was a temporary and violent lapse. But this does not mean that the nature is not

changeable. Only the calm inner conscious poise, the psychic discrimination and above all a will to change, stronger and steadier than before, must be so established that no uprising or invasion will be able to cloud even partly the discrimination or suspend the will. You saw the truth but this part of the old nature which rose up did not want to acknowledge — it wanted its play and imposed that on you. This time you must insist on a complete truthfulness in the whole being which will refuse to accept any denial of what the psychic discrimination sees or any affirmation or consent anywhere to what it disapproves, spiritual humility and the removal of self-righteousness, self-justification and the wish to impose yourself, the tendency to judge others etc. All these defects you know are in you; to cast them out may take time, but if the will to be true to the inner self in all ways is strong and persistent and vigilant and always calls in the Mother's force, it can be done sooner than now seems possible.

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That is all right [*not to worry about the recurrence of thought-movements*] — provided there is detachment and refusal of consent. One ought not to worry, but also one ought not to be negligent, i.e., one ought not to give the consent of the will or of the reason to these movements. For all consent prolongs their action or their recurrence. If they do not go when rejected by the mind and will, it is because of the habitual response in the less conscious parts of the nature. These have to become conscious by receiving the Light and Force until finally they refuse response to the calls of the lower nature.

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This is quite right. If you keep this condition [*of trust and devotion*], not allowing it to be entirely obscured or long clouded, you can move rapidly towards a new birth of your nature and the foundation of your life and all your thoughts and acts and movements in your true being, the psychic being. Never consent to the ideas, suggestions, feelings that bring back the cloud, the

confusion and the revolt. It is the consent that makes them strong to recur. Refuse the consent and they will be obliged to retire either immediately or after a time.

Remain fixed in the sunlight of the true consciousness — for only there is happiness and peace. They do not depend upon outside happenings, but on this alone.

The Need of Resolution

There is no reason why you should abandon hope of success in the Yoga. The state of depression which you now feel is temporary and it comes even upon the strongest sadhaks at one time or another or even often recurs. The only thing needed is to hold firm with the awakened part of the being, to reject all contrary suggestions and wait, opening yourself as much as you can to the true Power, till the crisis or change of which this depression is a stage, is completed. The suggestions which come to your mind telling you that you are not fit and that you must go back to the ordinary life, are false tamasic promptings from a hostile source. Ideas of this kind must always be rejected as inventions of the lower nature; even if they are founded on appearances which seem convincing to the ignorant mind, they are false, because they exaggerate a passing movement and represent it as the decisive and definite truth. There is only one truth in you on which you have to lay constant hold, the truth of your divine possibilities and the call of the higher Light to your nature. If you hold to that always or, even if you are momentarily shaken from your hold, return constantly to it, it will justify itself in the end in spite of all difficulties and obstacles and stumblings. All in you that resists will disappear in time with the progressive unfolding of your spiritual nature.

The disabilities of your past character and mind and vital habits need not discourage you. Some of them are, no doubt, serious — especially the animal sexuality of the vital parts and the support which the mind has given to it; but others have had to face obstacles as serious in themselves and have surmounted them in the purifying and liberating process of the Yoga. It may

not be easy to get rid of them altogether and it may take time; but if you persist and refuse all justification and all possibility of return to these things, you are bound in the end to conquer.

When you came, the psychic call in you was true and sincere, but in your external nature the response was confused and mixed with foreign elements of a lower kind. What has sunk in you is not the pure psychic urge, even if that is temporarily veiled, but a vital flame that was not entirely pure. It is because these foreign elements have been discouraged, that the vital nature in you feels despondent and refuses its support to the belief of the mind and to the psychic call. This often happens in the process of purification; what is needed is the conversion and surrender of the vital part. It must learn to demand only the highest Truth and to forego all insistence on the satisfaction of its inferior impulses and desires. It is this adhesion of the vital being that brings the full satisfaction and joy of the whole nature in the spiritual life. When that is there, it will be impossible even to think of returning to the ordinary existence. Meanwhile the mental will and the psychic aspiration must be your support; if you insist, the vital will finally yield and be converted and surrender.

Fix upon your mind and heart the resolution to live for the Divine Truth and for that alone; reject all that is contrary and incompatible with it and turn away from all lower desires; aspire to open yourself to the Divine Power and to no other. Do this in all sincerity and the present and living help you need will not fail you.

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The resolution, to be a real resolution, must be there always, fixed. If it is dependent on an urge, not self-dependent, it can also be knocked down by inertia.

The Need of Aspiration

It is good. When the external consciousness covers the inner being, then it is by a calm and patient aspiration — without

restlessness or disturbance — that the inner state must be called back until the external consciousness itself gets so habituated to the true condition that it is no longer willing to respond to anything else.

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I have told you that if you feel quietness somewhere in your consciousness, even if a part is not quiet, that is sufficient to lean on and get the Force to act through it. The quietness is quite as much a fact as the outer confusion. You have to accept it, to stress it, to aspire to keep and increase it — to reject the confusion.

What “reason” do you need to aspire for peace, purity, freedom from the lower nature, light, strength, Ananda, divine love, divine service? These are things good in themselves and the highest possible aim of human endeavour.

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If not a will, you have a wish in you or an aspiration; the word does not matter, the thing is there. If it gets clouded over, it is not the less there. There are the two things — the inner being with its aspiration, the physical and material with its obscurity and depressions. If you lay stress on the former instead of constantly denying its presence, that would make the progress easy; by laying stress on the outer obscurity and affirming that always and always thinking of it, you help it to last and delay the progress. Even so, if the inner aspiration is there, it must in the end conquer.

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Yes, but it is an absence of the one-pointed aspiration more than of strength of will — they [*certain sadhaks*] left because some desire or other got hold of them which was incompatible with the steadfast single-minded aspiration to the Divine Realisation.

If Buddha had the will only after tapasya, how was it that he left everything without hesitation in the search for Truth and never once looked back, regretted nor had any struggle? The

only difficulty was how to find the Truth, his single will to find it never faltered; the intensity of his tapasya itself would have been impossible without that strength of will. People less strong than Buddha may have to develop it by endeavour. Those who cannot do that have to find their strength in their reliance on the Divine Mother.

The Need of Will

There must be a fixed will for the spiritual life — that alone can overcome all obstacles.

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To be conscious is the first step towards overcoming [*lower movements*] — but for the overcoming strength is necessary and also detachment and the will to overcome.

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There must first be the will to change firmly conceived and held — then to open the consciousness to the Force and let it work with the inner assent to its working. When there is the psychic opening, then even the things most obstinate in the nature can change.

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Obviously what the Mother told you was the fact — but such missing of opportunities should not discourage, the recognition of it must be a spur to do better in future. Human nature is weak and is always missing the divine opportunities; but if the spirit is willing, the weakness of the nature is obliged eventually to yield to its will. Renew that will always, so that failure as well as success may become an opportunity and an incentive for farther progress.

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Develop the will — the will grows by a steady use, like the muscles, and grows strong.

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The only way to do it [*develop the true will-power*] is (1) to become aware of a conscious Force behind that uses the mind etc. (2) to learn by practice to direct that Force towards its object. I do not suppose you will find it easy to do either of these things at once — one must first learn to live more deeply in the inner consciousness than you have done hitherto.

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I suppose it must be [*weakness of the will*] because you have not been in the habit of using the will to compel the other parts of the nature — so when you want it done, they refuse to obey a control to which they are not accustomed and it also has not any habitual hold upon them.

The will is a part of the consciousness and ought to be in human beings the chief agent in controlling the activities of the nature.

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If there is a constant use of the will the rest of the being learns however slowly to obey the will and then the actions become in conformity with the will and not with the vital impulses and desires. As for the rest (the feelings and desires etc. themselves) if they are not indulged in action or imagination and not supported by the will, if they are merely looked at and rejected when they come, then after some struggle they begin to lose their force and dwindle away.

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There is no process [*for using the will*]. The will acts of itself when the mind and vital agree as in the case of a desire. If the desire is not satisfied, it goes on hammering, trying to get it, insisting on it, repeating the demand, making use of this person or that person, this device or that device, getting the mind to support it with reasons, representing it as a need that must be satisfied etc. etc. till the desire is satisfied. All that is the evidence of a will in action. When you have to use the will for the sadhana, you have not the same persistence, the mind finds reasons for

not going on with the effort, as soon as the difficulty becomes strong it is dropped, there is no continuity, no keeping of the will fixed on its object.

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There can be no persistence or insistence without will.

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By development it [*the will*] becomes fit to merge into the Mother's will. A will that is not strong is a great hindrance to sadhana.

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It is of course a fluctuation of the mental will that often prevents a knowledge gained from being put into steady practice. If the will is not strong enough, then the greater Will behind which is the will of the Mother, her conscious Force in which knowledge and will are united, must be called in to strengthen and support it. Very often, however, even if the will as well as the knowledge are there, the habit of the vital nature brings in the old reactions. This can only be overcome by a steady undiscouraged aspiration which will bring out more and more of the psychic and its true movements to push out and displace the wrong ones. The gradual and steady replacement of the old ignorant consciousness and its movements by the true psychic and spiritual consciousness is the nature of the transformation that is to be accomplished in the Yoga. But that takes time, it cannot be done easily or at once. Therefore one should not mind or be discouraged if meanwhile one finds the old movements recurring in spite of one's knowledge. Only one should try to keep more and more separate from them, so that even if they recur the consent of the being to them shall no longer be there.

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It depends¹ — if the consciousness is developed only on the side

¹ *The correspondent asked whether the consciousness merely warns a person not to do something or whether it also has the power to prevent him from doing it. — Ed.*

of knowledge, it will warn only. If on the side of will or power, it will help to effectuate.

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The will can make itself work — it is in its own nature a force or energy.

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The energy which dictates the action or prevents a wrong action is the Will.

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Peace is not a necessary precondition for the action of the will. When the being is troubled, it is often the business of the will to impose quiet on it.

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There is no such thing as an inert passive will. Will is dynamic in its nature. Even if it does not struggle or endeavour its very presence is dynamic and acts dynamically on the resistance. What you are speaking of is a passive wish = I would like it to be like that, I want it to be like that. That is not will.

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It [*a will without much energy*] simply means that your will is weak and not a true will. Queer kind of will! Perhaps it is like a motor car that won't go and you have to push from behind.

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It is not the right kind of will-power then [*if it increases fatigue*] — probably they use some fighting or effortful will-power instead of the quiet but strong will that calls down the higher consciousness and force.

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Will is will whether it is calm or restless, whether it acts in a Yogic or unyogic way, for a Yogic or an unyogic object. Do you

think Napoleon and Caesar had no will or that they were Yogis? You have strange ideas about things. You might just as well say that memory is memory only when it remembers the Divine and it is not memory when it remembers other things.

Lack of Will

Why cannot you see that this condition is not a true consciousness, but only a clouding of the truth, a clouding which you can always get rid of if you firmly choose to do so? What you express here is not a lack of understanding, but a lack of will — and this lack of will is not your own, but is forced upon you by a lower consciousness which overpowers you and forces you to reverse all the true values of feeling and knowledge. Your being does want to be free and at peace and happy in the light — it is this Falsehood seizing hold of your external mind that makes you want to be more dark and miserable and revolted and hate yourself and not to live. Such feelings, such a perverted will is entirely opposed to the normal feelings of the nature and cannot be “true” and right. There is nobody who asks you to pretend — what we ask you is to reject false perversions and wrong feelings and ignorance and not to go on supporting them as they want you to do. It is not courage and nobility to accept these things as the law of your nature, nor is it meanness and cowardice to aspire to a higher Truth and try to act according to it and make that the law of your nature.

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In the indolence of the will which does not want to make a sustained effort for a long period [*lies the difficulty*]. It is like a person who moves slightly half a leg for a second and then wonders why he is not already a hundred miles away at the goal after making such a gigantic effort.

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That [*the idea that one lacks will-power*] is the suggestion that has been enforced on you by the physical inertia. It has covered

up your will and persuaded you that there is no will left and no possibility of any will.

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One can always use the will. The idea that you cannot is only a suggestion of the inertia.

Will and the Divine Force or Power

There are always two elements in spiritual success — one's own steady will and endeavour and the Power that in one way or another helps and gives the result of the endeavour.

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The Force produces no definite and lasting fruit unless there is the will and the resolution to achieve in the sadhak.

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The higher action does not preclude a use of the will — will is an element of the higher action.

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These things [*the removal of vital demand and ego*] cannot be done in that way [*by a direct higher action*]. For transformation to be genuine, the difficulty has to be rejected by all the parts of the being. The Force can only help or enable them to do that, but it cannot replace this necessary action by a summary process. Your mind and inner being must impart their will to the whole.

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Yes. So long as there is not a constant action of the Force from above or else of a deeper Will from within, the mental will is necessary.

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You had written, "I need not bother about it — if peace is needed it will bring itself." Certainly the main stress should be on the

Force, but the active assent of the sadhak is needed; in certain things his will also may be needed as an instrument of the Force.

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It is true that the Force can work effectively without any effort on your part. It is not the effort, it is the assent of the being that it needs for its work.

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The Power can do everything, change everything and will do that but it can do it perfectly and easily and permanently only when your own will mental, vital and physical has been put on the side of the Truth. If you side with the vital ignorance and want to fight against your own spiritual change, it means a painful and difficult struggle before the work is done. That is why I insist on quietude at the very least and patient confidence with it, as far as you can — so that there may be a quiet and steady progress, not a painful and tormented movement full of relapse and struggle.

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Hardly anyone is strong enough to overcome by his own unaided aspiration and will the forces of the lower nature; even those who do it get only a certain kind of control, but not a complete mastery. Will and aspiration are needed to bring down the aid of the Divine Force and to keep the being on its side in its dealings with the lower powers. The Divine Force fulfilling the spiritual will and the heart's psychic aspiration can alone bring about the conquest.

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There is only one way if you cannot exert your will — it is to call the Force; even to call only with the mind or the mental word is better than being entirely passive and submitted to the attack, — for although it may not succeed instantaneously, the mental call even ends by bringing the Force and opening up the consciousness again. For everything depends upon that. In the

externalised consciousness obscurity and suffering can always be there; the more the internalised consciousness reigns, the more these things are pushed back and out and with the full internalised consciousness they cannot remain — if they come, it is as outside touches unable to lodge themselves in the being.

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The Force can bring forward and use the will.

Personal Effort and the Divine Force or Power

If there is no personal effort, if the sadhak is too indolent and tamasic to try, why should the Grace act?

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All that [*thinking one's efforts are useless*] is the physical mind refusing to take the trouble of the labour and struggle necessary for the spiritual achievement. It wants to get the highest, but desires a smooth course all the way. “Who the devil is going to face so much trouble for getting the Divine?” — that is the underlying feeling. The difficulty with the thoughts is a difficulty every Yogi has gone through — so is the phenomenon of a little result after some days of effort. It is only when one has cleared the field and ploughed and sown and watched over it that big harvests can be hoped for.

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Of course — personal effort without the supporting Force can do only a little, slowly, with much labour.

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One can either use effort [*to remove difficulties*], and then one must be patient and persevering, or one can rely on the Divine with a constant will and aspiration. But then the reliance has to be a true one, not insisting on immediate fruit.

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The only truth in your other experience — which, you say, seems at the time so true to you, — is that it is hopeless for you or anyone to get out of the inferior consciousness by your or his unaided effort. That is why when you sink into this inferior consciousness, everything seems hopeless to you, because you lose hold for a time of the true consciousness. But the suggestion is untrue, because you have an opening to the Divine and are not bound to remain in the inferior consciousness.

When you are in the true consciousness, then you see that everything can be done, even if at present only a slight beginning has been made; but a beginning is enough, once the Force, the Power is there. For the truth is that it can do everything and only time and the soul's aspiration are needed for the entire change and the soul's fulfilment.

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It does not matter what defects you may have in your nature. The one thing that matters is your keeping yourself open to the Force. Nobody can transform himself by his own unaided efforts; it is only the Divine Force that can transform him. If you keep yourself open, all the rest will be done for you.

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As I have told you it is no longer useful to think of right understanding and wrong movements and get upset when they are felt to be not there or imperfect. Nobody can change himself — even the strongest sadhaks here recognise that. Their effort is to let the Peace, Force, Light, Ananda of the Mother come in, to let that grow — for that will change them, they know. So long as it is not there, has not yet touched, is not growing, they struggle with the mind and vital, because they cannot help doing so and it is necessary for preparing the consciousness a little to admit the Peace and Force. But once these have touched, the only thing to do is to lay all the stress on that, trust to it, surrender and give oneself to it — for the straight road is found and the true power and consciousness have been experienced.

Letting the Force Work

The way in which the pains went shows you how to deal with the whole nature, — for it is the same with the mental and vital as with the physical causes of ill-ease and disturbance. To remain quiet within, to hold on to the faith and experience that to be quiet and open and let the Force work is the one way. Naturally, to be wholly conscious is not possible yet, but to feel it, to open, to let it work, to observe its result, that is the first thing. It is the beginning of consciousness and the way to complete consciousness.

The Divine Help

Help is given in whatever way is necessary or possible. It is not limited to Force, Light, Knowledge.

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Certainly, all the help possible will be given. As for the method, there are always the two ways possible — one to overcome the difficulty in its own field, the other to develop the inner realisation until it grows so strong that the roots you speak of have no longer any soil to hold by and come out easily by a spontaneous psychic change.

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Cling to the help always, — when you cannot feel, call for it and remain quiet till you feel it again. It is only the covering you spoke of that comes between you and the sense of its presence — for it is always there.

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It [*the need to call for help*] diminishes as one gets higher and higher or rather fuller and fuller, being replaced more and more by the automatic action of the Force.

The Divine Protection

The grace and protection are always with you. When in any

inner or outer difficulty or trouble do not allow it to oppress you; take refuge with the Divine Force that protects.

If you do that always with faith and sincerity, you will find something opening in you which will always remain calm and peaceful in spite of all superficial disturbances.

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Yes, the Divine's Protection is surely with you, since it sustains you through all. The untoward physical happenings are transient and will certainly pass away leaving full room for a greater state.

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One should not expect too much from the Divine Protection for, constituted as we are and the world is, the Divine Protection has to act within limits. Of course miracles happen, but we have no claim to it.