Chapter VIII

The Release from the Heart and the Mind

But the ascending soul has to separate itself not only from the life in the body but from the action of the life-energy in the mind; it has to make the mind say as the representative of the Purusha “I am not the Life; the Life is not the self of the Purusha, it is only a working and only one working of Prakriti.” The characteristics of Life are action and movement, a reaching out to absorb and assimilate what is external to the individual and a principle of satisfaction or dissatisfaction in what it seizes upon or what comes to it, which is associated with the all-pervading phenomenon of attraction and repulsion. These three things are everywhere in Nature because Life is everywhere in Nature. But in us mental beings they are all given a mental value according to the mind which perceives and accepts them. They take the form of action, of desire and of liking and disliking, pleasure and pain. The Prana is everywhere in us supporting not only the action of our body, but of our sense-mind, our emotional mind, our thought-mind; and bringing its own law or dharma into all these, it confuses, it limits, it throws into discord their right action and creates that impurity of misplacement and that tangled confusion which is the whole evil of our psychological existence. In that confusion one law seems to reign, the law of desire. As the universal Divine Being, all-embracing and all-possessing, acts, moves, enjoys purely for the satisfaction of divine Delight, so the individual life acts, moves, enjoys and suffers predominantly for the satisfaction of desire. Therefore the psychic life-energy presents itself to our experience as a sort of desire-mind, which we have to conquer if we mean to get back to our true self.

Desire is at once the motive of our actions, our lever of
accomplishment and the bane of our existence. If our sense-mind, emotional mind, thought-mind could act free from the intrusions and importations of the life-energy, if that energy could be made to obey their right action instead of imposing its own yoke on our existence, all human problems would move harmoniously to their right solution. The proper function of the life-energy is to do what it is bidden by the divine principle in us, to reach to and enjoy what is given to it by that indwelling Divine and not to desire at all. The proper function of the sense-mind is to lie open passively, luminously to the contacts of Life and transmit their sensations and the *rasa* or right taste and principle of delight in them to the higher function; but interfered with by the attractions and repulsions, the acceptances and refusals, the satisfactions and dissatisfactions, the capacities and incapacities of the life-energy in the body it is, to begin with, limited in its scope and, secondly, forced in these limits to associate itself with all these discords of the life in Matter. It becomes an instrument for pleasure and pain instead of for delight of existence.

Similarly the emotional mind compelled to take note of all these discords and subject itself to their emotional reactions becomes a hurtling field of joy and grief, love and hatred, wrath, fear, struggle, aspiration, disgust, likes, dislikes, indifferences, content, discontent, hopes, disappointments, gratitude, revenge and all the stupendous play of passion which is the drama of life in the world. This chaos we call our soul. But the real soul, the real psychic entity which for the most part we see little of and only a small minority in mankind has developed, is an instrument of pure love, joy and the luminous reaching out to fusion and unity with God and our fellow-creatures. This psychic entity is covered up by the play of the mentalised Prana or desire-mind which we mistake for the soul; the emotional mind is unable to mirror the real soul in us, the Divine in our hearts, and is obliged instead to mirror the desire-mind.

So too the proper function of the thought-mind is to observe, understand, judge with a dispassionate delight in knowledge and open itself to messages and illuminations playing upon all that it observes and upon all that is yet hidden from it but must
progressively be revealed, messages and illuminations that secretly flash down to us from the divine Oracle concealed in light above our mentality whether they seem to descend through the intuitive mind or arise from the seeing heart. But this it cannot do rightly because it is pinned to the limitations of the life-energy in the senses, to the discords of sensation and emotion, and to its own limitations of intellectual preference, inertia, straining, self-will which are the form taken in it by the interference of this desire-mind, this psychic Prana. As is said in the Upanishads, our whole mind-consciousness is shot through with the threads and currents of this Prana, this Life-energy that strives and limits, grasps and misses, desires and suffers, and only by its purification can we know and possess our real and eternal self.

It is true that the root of all this evil is the ego-sense and that the seat of the conscious ego-sense is the mind itself; but in reality the conscious mind only reflects an ego already created in the subconscious mind in things, the dumb soul in the stone and the plant which is present in all body and life and only finally delivered into voicefulness and wakefulness but not originally created by the conscious mind. And in this upward procession it is the life-energy which has become the obstinate knot of the ego, it is the desire-mind which refuses to relax the knot even when the intellect and the heart have discovered the cause of their ills and would be glad enough to remove it; for the Prana in them is the Animal who revolts and who obscures and deceives their knowledge and coerces their will by his refusal.

Therefore the mental Purusha has to separate himself from association and self-identification with this desire-mind. He has to say “I am not this thing that struggles and suffers, grieves and rejoices, loves and hates, hopes and is baffled, is angry and afraid and cheerful and depressed, a thing of vital moods and emotional passions. All these are merely workings and habits of Prakriti in the sensational and emotional mind.” The mind then draws back from its emotions and becomes with these, as with the bodily movements and experiences, the observer or witness. There is again an inner cleavage. There is this emotional mind in which these moods and passions continue to occur according to
the habit of the modes of Nature and there is the observing mind which sees them, studies and understands but is detached from them. It observes them as if in a sort of action and play on a mental stage of personages other than itself, at first with interest and a habit of relapse into identification, then with entire calm and detachment, and, finally, attaining not only to calm but to the pure delight of its own silent existence, with a smile at their unreality as at the imaginary joys and sorrows of a child who is playing and loses himself in the play. Secondly, it becomes aware of itself as master of the sanction who by his withdrawal of sanction can make this play to cease. When the sanction is withdrawn, another significant phenomenon takes place; the emotional mind becomes normally calm and pure and free from these reactions, and even when they come, they no longer rise from within but seem to fall on it as impressions from outside to which its fibres are still able to respond; but this habit of response dies away and the emotional mind is in time entirely liberated from the passions which it has renounced. Hope and fear, joy and grief, liking and disliking, attraction and repulsion, content and discontent, gladness and depression, horror and wrath and fear and disgust and shame and the passions of love and hatred fall away from the liberated psychic being.

What takes their place? It may be, if we will, an entire calm, silence and indifference. But although this is a stage through which the soul has usually to pass, it is not the final aim we have placed before us. Therefore the Purusha becomes also the master who wills and whose will it is to replace wrong by right enjoyment of the psychic existence. What he wills, Nature executes. What was fabric-stuff of desire and passion, is turned into reality of pure, equal and calmly intense love and joy and oneness. The real soul emerges and takes the place left vacant by the desire-mind. The cleansed and emptied cup is filled with the wine of divine love and delight and no longer with the sweet and bitter poison of passion. The passions, even the passion for good, misrepresent the divine nature. The passion of pity with its impure elements of physical repulsion and emotional inability to bear the suffering of others has to be rejected and replaced by
the higher divine compassion which sees, understands, accepts
the burden of others and is strong to help and heal, not with self-will and revolt against the suffering in the world and with ignorant accusation of the law of things and their source, but with light and knowledge and as an instrument of the Divine in its emergence. So too the love that desires and grasps and is troubled with joy and shaken with grief must be rejected for the equal, all-embracing love that is free from these things and has no dependence upon circumstances and is not modified by response or absence of response. So we shall deal with all the movements of the soul; but of these things we shall speak farther when we consider the Yoga of self-perfection.

As with action and inaction, so it is with this dual possibility of indifference and calm on the one side and active joy and love on the other. Equality, not indifference is the basis. Equal endurance, impartial indifference, calm submission to the causes of joy and grief without any reaction of either grief or joy are the preparation and negative basis of equality; but equality is not fulfilled till it takes its positive form of love and delight. The sense-mind must find the equal *rasa* of the All-Beautiful, the heart the equal love and Ananda for all, the psychic Prana the enjoyment of this *rasa*, love and Ananda. This, however, is the positive perfection that comes by liberation; our first object on the path of knowledge is rather the liberation that comes by detachment from the desire-mind and by the renunciation of its passions.

The desire-mind must also be rejected from the instrument of thought and this is best done by the detachment of the Purusha from thought and opinion itself. Of this we have already had occasion to speak when we considered in what consists the integral purification of the being. For all this movement of knowledge which we are describing is a method of purification and liberation whereby entire and final self-knowledge becomes possible, a progressive self-knowledge being itself the instrument of the purification and liberation. The method with the thought-mind will be the same as with all the rest of the being. The Purusha, having used the thought-mind for release
from identification with the life and body and with the mind of desire and sensations and emotions, will turn round upon the thought-mind itself and will say “This too I am not; I am not the thought or the thinker; all these ideas, opinions, speculations, strivings of the intellect, its predilections, preferences, dogmas, doubts, self-corrections are not myself; all this is only a working of Prakriti which takes place in the thought-mind.” Thus a division is created between the mind that thinks and wills and the mind that observes and the Purusha becomes the witness only; he sees, he understands the process and laws of his thought, but detaches himself from it. Then as the master of the sanction he withdraws his past sanction from the tangle of the mental undercurrent and the reasoning intellect and causes both to cease from their importunities. He becomes liberated from subjection to the thinking mind and capable of the utter silence. For perfection there is necessary also the resumption by the Purusha of his position as the lord of his Nature and the will to replace the mere mental undercurrent and intellect by the truth-conscious thought that lightens from above. But the silence is necessary; in the silence and not in the thought we shall find the Self, we shall become aware of it, not merely conceive it, and we shall withdraw out of the mental Purusha into that which is the source of the mind. But for this withdrawal a final liberation is needed, the release from the ego-sense in the mind.