Chapter Five

Dealing with Depression and Despondency

Despondency over Difficulties

Mistakes are always possible, so long as any part of the mental (even the subconscious part of it) is not thoroughly transformed. There is no need to be disturbed by that.

* Whatever you see, don’t get disturbed or depressed. If one sees a defect, one must look at it with the utmost quietude and call down more force and light to get rid of it.

* When some weakness comes up you should take it as an opportunity to know what is still to be done and call down the strength into that part. Despondency is not the right way to meet it.

* Let the peace and self-giving increase till it takes hold also of the parts in which there are imperfections and gets rid of them. As for the imperfections, it is right not to be troubled by them — only one has to be conscious of them and have the steady and quiet will that they should go.

* There was no true cause for the trouble. You have allowed it to come into you from outside. There are always forces moving about in the atmosphere trying to disturb the sadhana and the progress. You must be careful not to allow them to invade you with their suggestions whether of depression, despondency, discontent or of anger or desire or of any ego-movement, for it is
these things that they try to raise. When they come, instead of remaining in this way and trying to find an external cause for them, recognise them and reject at once.

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When a habit of these moods (depression or revolt) has been formed, they cannot be got rid of at once. There are three ways of doing it — (1) to strengthen your own will, so that nothing can come or stay as it likes but only as you like; (2) to think of something else, plunge the mind in some healthy activity; (3) to turn to the Mother and call in her force. One can do any of these or all, but even in doing them, it will take a little time to get rid of the habit.

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There are two golden rules. (1) Never be depressed or upset by difficulties or stumbles. (2) Press always quietly forward, then however long it seems to take, always progress will be made and one day you will be surprised to find yourself near the goal. It is like the curves followed by the train in the ascent of the mountain — they circle round but always nearer and nearer to the goal.

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The experience is correct. In this experience the correspondent rose up into the infinite sky and saw the Mother, who, having prepared things on a higher plane, sent down her Force to work out the results on the planes below. — Ed.

There is no need for sadness. Everyone has his difficulties and
it is a mistake to desire the state of another. One must follow the movement of one's own heart and self and psychic without looking elsewhere.

* The egoism, desires, faults of the nature are in everybody very much the same. But once one begins to be conscious of them and has the will to be free, then one has only to keep that will and there will be no real danger. For when one begins to be conscious in the way you have begun and something from within raises up all that was hidden, it means that the Mother's grace is on your nature and her force is working and your inner being is aiding the Mother's force to get rid of all these things. So you must not be sorrowful or discouraged or fear anything, but look steadily at all that comes out and have the will that it should go completely and for ever. With the Mother's force working and the psychic being supporting the force, all can be done and all will surely be done. This purification is made just in order that no trouble may occur in the future such as happened to some because they were not purified — in order that the higher consciousness may come into a purified nature and the inner transformation securely take place. Go on therefore with faith and courage putting your reliance on the Mother.

* These questionings and depressions are very foolish movements of the mind. If you were not open to the Grace, you would not have had these descents or experiences and there would have been no such progress as you have made. You have not to put such questions but to take it as a settled fact, and with full faith in the Mother and her working in you go on with your sadhana. Whatever difficulties there may be, will be solved in time by the natural progress of the sadhana.

* What you write is no doubt true and it is necessary to see it so as to be able to comprehend and grasp the true attitude necessary
for the sadhana. But, as I have said, one must not be distressed or depressed by perceiving the weaknesses inherent in human nature and the difficulty of getting them out. The difficulty is natural, for they have been there for thousands of lives and are the very nature of man’s vital and mental ignorance. It is not surprising that they should have a power to stick and take time to disappear. But there is a true being and a true consciousness that is there in us hidden by these surface formations of nature and which can shake them off once it emerges. By taking the right attitude of selfless devotion within and persisting in it in spite of the surface nature’s troublesome self-repetitions one enables this inner being and consciousness to emerge and with the Mother’s Force working in it deliver the being from all return of the movements of the old nature.

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Why do you indulge in these exaggerated feelings of remorse and despair when these things come up from the subconscious? They do not help and make it more, not less difficult to eliminate what comes. Such returns of an old nature that is long expelled from the conscious parts of the being always happen in sadhana. It does not at all mean that the nature is unchangeable. Try to recover the inner quietude, draw back from these movements and look at them calmly, reducing them to their true proportions. Your true nature is that in which you have peace and ananda and the love of the Divine. This other is only a fringe of the outer personality which in spite of these returns is destined to drop away as the true being extends and increases.

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To be miserable may remind you of the defects of your external nature, but I do not see how it is going to cure them. I am not asking you to be frivolously happy, but to be quiet and quietly confident, rejecting these old movements, but for the rest trusting not in a restless self-torturing personal effort but to the Divine Force to change the external nature.

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As to your going away for a time in order to get rid of your difficulty with X, a difficulty can never be overcome by your running away from it. And if you cannot overcome it with the direct and immediate help we can give you and have always been giving you and the support of our presence, I do not see how you are going to do it at a distance and without our immediate help and presence.

It seems to me that all this comes from your having taken a wrong way with yourself in meeting the consequences of your stumble. It is not by tormenting yourself with remorse and harassing thoughts and sleepless nights that you can overcome. It is by looking straight at yourself, very quietly, with a quiet and firm resolution and then going on cheerfully and bravely in full confidence and reliance, trusting in the grace, serenely and vigilantly, anchoring yourself on your psychic being, calling down more and more of the love and Ananda, turning more and more exclusively to the Mother. That is the true way — and there is no other.

There is no reason to be so much cut down or despair of your progress. Evidently you have had a surging up of the old movements, but that can always happen so long as there is not an entire change of the old nature both in the conscious and subconscious parts. Something came up that made you get out of poise and stray into a past round of feelings. The one thing to do is to quiet yourself and get back into the true consciousness and poise. Always keep within and do things without involving yourself in them, then nothing adverse will happen or, if it does, no serious reaction will come.

The idea of leaving for any reason is of course absurd and out of the question. Eight years is a very short time for transformation. Most people spend as much as that or more to get conscious of their defects and acquire the serious will to change — and after that it takes a long time to get the will turned into full and final accomplishment. Each time one stumbles, one has to get back onto the right footing and go on with fresh resolution; by doing that the full change comes.
Dwelling on One’s Weaknesses or Difficulties

Of course it is necessary to see one’s own weaknesses, but it is not good to dwell too much upon them, — it only brings sadness and restlessness and despondency. Fix your mind rather on what you want to be, for that concentration brings the power to become it — it is the best way also to get rid of the defects and weaknesses; for it is when something strong and positive fills the nature that it changes and its defects begin to disappear.

Mistakes of action and thought and feeling naturally bring these outward reactions [of regret and sorrow]; they are an obstinate part of human nature, but one has to outgrow them steadily. If they recur, one must not get upset and brood over them; the aim must be to keep quiet and recover as quickly as possible — so that the Force can at once resume its work and not be held suspended by the mind’s preoccupation with mistakes and stumbles.

Difficulties and perplexities can never be got rid of by the mind brooding on them and trying in that way to get out of them; this habit of the mind only makes them recur without a solution and keeps up by brooding the persistent tangle. It is from something above and outside the perplexities that the solution must come. The difficulty of the physical mind — not the true thinking intelligence — is that it does not want to believe in this larger consciousness outside itself because it is not aware of it; and it remains shut like a box in itself, not admitting the light that is all round it and pressing to get in. It is a subtle law of the action of consciousness that if you stress difficulties — you have to observe them, of course, but not stress them, they will quite sufficiently do that for themselves — the difficulties tend to stick or even increase; on the contrary, if you put your whole stress on faith and aspiration and concentrate steadily on what you aspire to, that will sooner or later tend towards realisation. It is this change of stress, a change in the poise and attitude of
the mind, that will be the more helpful process.

As for details, the method of the mind concentrating on details and trying to put them right is a slow and tardy one; it has to be done, but as a subordinate process, not the chief one. If it succeeds at all, it is because after some period of struggle and stress, something is released and there is an opening and the larger consciousness of which I speak gets through and produces some general result. But the progress is much more rapid if one can make the opening the main thing and keep the dealing with details as something resultant and subordinate. When there is this opening, some essential (therefore general) progress can be made and, as you yourself say, “express and translate itself into details”. The mind is always trying to handle details and construct out of them some general result; but what is above mind and even the best powers of the higher ranges of mind tend rather to bring about some essential change and make it or let it express itself, translate itself in the necessary details.

I may add, however, that one can feel the essential change without its expressing itself in details; e.g., one can feel a wide silent peace or a state of freedom and joy and rest silent and secure in it without needing to translate it into sundry details in order to feel the progress made.

It is not a theory but a constant experience and very tangible when it comes that there is above us, above the consciousness in the physical body, a great supporting extension as it were of peace, light, power, joy — that we can become aware of it, and bring it down into the physical consciousness and that that, at first for a time, afterwards more frequently and for a longer time, in the end for good, can remain and change the whole basis of our daily consciousness. Even before we are aware of it above, we can suddenly feel it coming down and entering into us. The need is to have an aspiration towards it, make the mind quiet so that what we call the opening is rendered possible. A quieted mind (not necessarily motionless or silent, though it is good if one can have that at will) and a persistent aspiration in the heart are the two main keys of the Yoga. Activity of the mind is a much slower process and does not by
itself lead to these decisive results. It is the difference between a
straight road and an approach through constant circles, spirals
or meanders.

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In your dealing with your difficulties and the wrong movements
that assail you, you are probably making the mistake of identi-
fying yourself with them too much and regarding them as part
of your own nature. You should rather draw back from them,
detach and dissociate yourself from them, regard them as move-
ments of the universal lower imperfect and impure nature, forces
that enter into you and try to make you their instrument for their
self-expression. By so detaching and dissociating yourself it will
be more possible for you to discover and to live more and more
in a part of yourself, your inner or your psychic being, which is
not attacked or troubled by these movements, finds them foreign
to itself and automatically refuses assent to them and feels itself
always turned to or in contact with the Divine Forces and the
higher planes of consciousness. Find that part of your being and
live in it; to be able to do so is the true foundation of the Yoga.

By so standing back it will be easier also for you to find a
quiet poise in yourself, behind the surface struggle, from which
you can more effectively call in our help to deliver you. The
Divine presence, calm, peace, purity, force, light, joy, wideness
are above, waiting to descend in you. Find this quietude behind
and your mind also will become quieter and through the quiet
mind you can call down the descent first of the purity and peace
and then of the Divine Force. If you can feel this peace and purity
descending into you, you can then call it down again and again
till it begins to settle; you will feel too the Force working in you
to change the movements and transform the consciousness. In
this working you will be aware of the presence and power of the
Mother. Once that is done, all the rest will be a question of time
and of the progressive evolution in you of your true and divine
nature.

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The statement\textsuperscript{2} is a general one and like all general statements subject to qualification according to circumstances. What I meant was to discourage what some do which is to be always dwelling on their difficulties and shortcomings only, for that makes them turn for ever like squirrels in a cage always in the same circle of difficulties without the least breaking of light through the clouds. The sentence would be more accurate or generally applicable if it were written “dwell too much” or “dwell solely”. Naturally, without rejection nothing can be done. And in hard periods or moments concentration on the difficulties is inevitable. Also in the early stages one has often to do a great amount of clearance work so that the road can be followed at all.

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It \textit{the descent of the sadhana from the mind into the vital} came by being preoccupied too much with the difficulties of the nature. It is always better to dwell on the good side of things in yourself — I do not mean in an egoistic way, but with faith and cheerful confidence, calling down the positive experience of which the nature is already capable so that a constant positive growth can help in the rejection of all that has to be rejected. But in fact one gets often projected into the vital difficulties at an early stage and then instead of going from the mind into the psychic (through the heart) one has to go through the disturbed vital.

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It \textit{retracing one’s steps from the vital into the psychic} can be done, if you refuse to be preoccupied with the idea of your difficulties and concentrate on really helpful and positive things. Be more cheerful and confident. Sex and Doubt and Co. are there, 

\textsuperscript{2} A statement of Sri Aurobindo which the correspondent wrongly quoted as follows: “It is a mistake to dwell on the lower nature and its obstacles, which is the negative side of the Sadhana… The positive side of experience of the descent is the more important thing.” In transcribing this statement, the correspondent left out two words: Sri Aurobindo wrote “dwell too much”, not simply “dwell”. — Ed.
no doubt, but the Divine is there also inside you. Open your eyes and look and look till the veil is rent and you see Him or Her!

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You are not asked to do anything that you are incapable of; it is something that you have done already and of which, therefore, you are capable—you are not asked to change your nature by your own effort but only to stand back from these ideas and thoughts, refuse to indulge them and remain quiet within and allow the Force you have repeatedly felt to change you. To repeat constantly, “I am weak, I am unfit, I am bad” will lead you nowhere.

**Raising Up Difficulties**

As to the obstacles, you should not do anything to call them up or increase their intensity or take pleasure in them. If they come of themselves, you have to surrender your being to the Mother and call in the Light and the psychic being to remove them.

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The method you speak of is, I understand, that of raising up the difficulties in order to know and exhaust or destroy them. It is inevitable once one enters into Yoga that the difficulties should rise up and they go on rising up so long as anything of them is left in the system at all. It may be thought then that it is better to raise them oneself in a mass so as to get the thing done once for all. But though this may succeed in some cases, it is not even in the mental and vital a safe or certain method. Exhaustion, of course, is impossible; the things that create the difficulties are cosmic forces, forces of the cosmic Ignorance, and cannot be exhausted. People talk of their getting exhausted because after a time they lose strength and dwindle, but that is only by force of the constant rejection by the Purusha and by force of a divine intervention aiding this rejection and dissolving or destroying the difficulty each time it shows its face. Even so, the idea of getting rid of difficulties in a lump seldom works; something remains
and returns until suddenly there comes a divine intervention which is final or else a change of consciousness which makes the return of the difficulty impossible. Still, in the mental and vital it can be done.

In the physical it is much more dangerous, because here it is the physical adhar itself that is attacked and a too great mass of physical difficulties may destroy or disable or permanently injure. The only thing to do here is to get the physical consciousness (down to the most material parts) open to the Power, then to make it accustomed to respond and obey and to each physical difficulty as it arises, apply or call in the divine Power to throw out the attacking force. The physical nature is a thing of habits; it is out of habit that it responds to the forces of illness; one has to get into it the contrary habit of responding to the Divine Force only. This of course so long as a highest consciousness does not descend to which illness is impossible.

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It is the old habit of the outer consciousness from which it refuses to be delivered. Until this will to repeat the old movements is thrown away, the Force works but under difficulties and behind instead of taking up the frontal consciousness as it would if the assent of the external nature were there. There is also the old persistent habit of raising up and stressing the difficulties instead of rejecting them — the wrong idea that accepting, approving and insisting on their presence is the only way of getting rid of them. I have told you that that is not the way and only prolongs the struggle.

**Struggling with Difficulties**

There can be no doubt that you can go through — everyone has these struggles; what is needed to pass through is sincerity and perseverance.

There is no use in inviting these struggles, as many do, or even in accepting them when they come for the sake of fighting them out, for they always repeat themselves. When they cannot
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be avoided then they must be faced — one cannot be altogether without them, especially in the earlier part of the Yoga; but if you can quietly evade them, that is already an advance. To become quiet and quietly to call back the true psychic state until it becomes normal and either eliminates or minimises the struggle, that is the best way to progress.

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It is better [in dealing with the hostile forces] to proceed by a quiet rejection and growth in consciousness — and not invite battle — though, if a struggle is forced on you, you must meet it with calm and courage.

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No objection — it is a very good thing to keep working in the higher consciousness. It is more effective than struggling all the time down below with the lower forces.

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There is no objection to doing the sadhana, but it must be done quietly without this constant struggle and disquietude — not minding if it takes time, not getting into a constant rhythm of struggling against difficulties. That is my point.

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One must get a knack of remaining quiet and bringing into the quietude the play of the Presence, Force, Light, etc. which is the action of the Sadhana. A struggling effort brings only a minimum result at the price of much confusion and disorder.

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From your last letter it is clear that it is not your own will that pushes you to go but something that has taken hold of your mind, a clutch of some Force which is using old movements of the outward mind and vital to drive the action. All the more reason to reject this action as contrary to the soul’s and heart’s true feeling. The pride that says, “I am one of those who can
break but will not bend”, is a poor thing and conceals the fact that one is bending before forces and impulses that are ignorant and obscure. Its result is, as you yourself have seen at the end of your letter, that one bends to the lower forces of nature but refuses to bend to the Divine.

If sadhana is a struggle between the higher will and the old forces of nature bringing suffering and inner torment, we do not want you to do that kind of sadhana. That is not the spirit of our Yoga. What we want you to do is to recover your quietude and go on in that. To have the basis of quietude and allow the Divine Force to work in you firmly and quietly is always the best method — it is not necessary to proceed through a big personal effort, disturbance and struggle. Come back to this — open yourself once more, as you did before — then you could get back sleep or health in a day or two and were growing inwardly without excessive trouble — and let the Mother’s Power and Grace lead you.

I shall do all to help you and pull you out, but that which has closed itself in you must open for the help to work quickly as it did before. Otherwise too it can pull you out, but if there is this strong obstruction that has to be undone, time is needed. A central change of attitude in your mind would, I believe, make all the difference — it has done so before.

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He can continue his endeavour and let us know if there is any result. The difficulties that have risen in him are quite normal and a natural reaction to the effort he is making. It is usual for these resistances to rise up, for they have to manifest themselves in order that they may be dealt with and thrown out. If he perseveres, that should happen sooner or later. But it is best not to struggle with the resistances but to stand back from them, observe as a witness, reject these movements and call on the Divine Power to remove them. Surrender of the nature is not an easy thing and may take a long time; surrender of the self, if one can do it, is easier and once that is done, that of the nature will come about sooner or later. But for that it is necessary to detach oneself from the action of the Prakriti and see oneself as separate.
That is why I asked whether he had any (major) realisation from his previous sadhana. To observe the movements as a witness without being discouraged or disturbed is the best way to effect the necessary detachment and separation. This also would help to increase the receptivity to any aid that may be given to him and to bring about the reliance, nirbhara.

If he turns to us, we will of course give him whatever help he can just now consciously or subconsciously receive.

**The Absurdity of Suicide**

Suicide is an absurd solution; he is quite mistaken in thinking that it will give him peace. He will only carry his difficulties with him, enter into a more miserable condition of existence beyond and bring them back to another life on earth. The only remedy is to shake off these morbid ideas and face life with a clear will for some definite work to be done as the life’s aim and with a quiet and active courage.

* That is absurd! Dropping the body because of a difficulty does not enable one to come back with a better body. One comes back with the same difficulty to solve.

People do not come here in order to throw off the body. If everybody here dropped his body because of acute difficulties, three quarters of the Asram would be dead by this time.

* That is not right. Throwing away the life does not improve the chances for the next time. It is in this life and body that one must get things done.

* Sadhana has to be done in the body, it cannot be done by the soul without the body. When the body drops, the soul goes wandering in other worlds — and finally it comes back to another life and another body. Then all the difficulties it had not solved meet it
again in the new life. So what is the use of leaving the body?

Moreover if one throws away the body wilfully, one suffers much in the other worlds, and when one is born again, it is in worse, not in better conditions.

The only sensible thing is to face the difficulties in this life and this body and conquer them.

*Death is not a way to succeed in sadhana. If you die in that way [suicide], you will only have the same difficulties again with probably less favourable circumstances.*

The way to succeed in sadhana is to refuse to be discouraged, to aspire simply and sincerely so that the Mother’s force may work in you and bring down what is above. No man ever succeeded in this sadhana by his own merit. To become open and plastic to the Mother is the one thing needed.

*Despair is absurd and talking of suicide quite out of place. However a man may stumble, the Divine Grace will be there so long as he aspires for it and in the end lead him through.*

*If she remains firm and calm and keeps an unshaken faith in the Divine Power, that will carry her through every trial. Suicide is no solution; it only injures the life of the soul and the problems and difficulties one tries to evade by it seize one again in another form in another life.*

*It [an impulse to commit suicide] can come from two sources. (1) An old impression in the subconscient, usually from a past suicide in the family or surroundings. (2) An invasion from one of those around you. Many sadhaks have this suggestion and in some it takes the form of a periodic attack. One must never allow the suggestion to stick or in the least entertain it, otherwise it may fasten in the subconscient and give trouble.*
It [the thought of committing suicide] seems to me an excessive reaction considering that all that is in question is some habitual movements of the external being which do not affect the inner realisation. These external habits have to be changed, but you can do it quietly without allowing their presence to throw you into despondency and despair. It is best done by detaching yourself from them and calling in the Mother’s Force to act there and spread the deeper realisation into the outward parts. Your reasoning about violently getting rid of the body in order to get a better one hereafter is entirely wrong. For when one throws away the present life in that way instead of facing its difficulties one not only gets into blacker difficulties after death but in the next life all becomes not better but worse — an inferior embodiment with all the former difficulty from which you fled renewed with less favourable circumstances. There is no way out there. Instead of indulging such feelings, you should put them away from you and turn to the Mother’s Grace which has not failed and which is not going to fail you for strength and succour. Recover your balance and develop the psychic progress you were already making so rapidly up to now.

Suicide is the worst way that anyone could take to get out of a spiritual difficulty. It only increases and prolongs the difficulty; for it continues it after death, the struggle, the suffering in an exaggerated form and it has to be faced again in another life. The dissolution of the physical elements into Nature would leave the mind and vital as they are, with all their problems present and unsolved. Surely you are not so ignorant as to think that you will cease to be merely by leaving the body?

When the Mother said that by doing that you would bring trouble to the Asram, it is not merely the entry of the police into the Asram, the inquiry and the immediate local scandal that she meant. It would bring a general discredit on the Asram, the Yoga, myself and my work, arm all the numerous enemies here and outside against me, shake the whole Asram and create a terrible example and perhaps make the fulfilment of my work impossible.
for some years together. Nothing written by you could prevent that from happening — for it would be the natural, logical and inevitable result and it is what the hostile Influences intend when they put this suggestion into your mind or the mind of others. I write plainly because you must realise what would be the natural consequences of doing what is suggested to you by these Powers in your fits of irrational despair.

In view of what it would mean for yourself and for me and the Divine Work, I ask you to give me your promise never again to yield to this suggestion or contemplate seriously its fulfilment.

I have promised you that, if you keep on, the transformation shall take place and it is not an idle promise that I have made. If once you threw off this Influence, the one that gives you fits like this, the transformation would not only be certain but swift and easy. But in any case, if you keep on aspiring for transformation and not for escape, as you wrote today, the transformation is bound to come.

P. S. I have written in the last paragraph above what I wanted to say in brief. I ask you to react more decisively against the old influence of vital darkness and confusion — to decide firmly not to let it prevail ever again to this extent. It is not even transformation, but a chance that is needed for the true being that is in you, the being of love and radiance and harmony to come out from the clouds in a lasting way. Once it can do that, all trouble would be over.

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I must remind you of your promise not to yield to sorrow and despair and to face your difficulties with fortitude and patience. Suicide is not only a weak and unmanly evasion, but it is worse than useless since the same misery continues after death intensified in the consciousness which can think of nothing else and one has to come back to earth and face the same difficulties under worse conditions. The Gita has never said that suicide can under any circumstances lead to Nirvana; the death spoken of is a natural or a Yogic death with the mind concentrated with faith and absorption in the Divine. I am sure that Ramakrishna
also never meant such a thing as that anyone dying under any circumstances would have his last wish satisfied. There is no escape by that kind of exit. I do not know either how you can say that you love me and at the same time deliberately decide to deal such a blow to me as your suicide would be. I do not speak of X and others to whom you have still some obligations and what it would mean for them. It is also strange that you should think I could be willing to receive your property or any money offered at such a price or ask Y to aid in such an arrangement. You must have been very much clouded by your fit of despair not to see that. All that apart, I must press on you not to allow these dark attacks with their morbid suggestions to carry you away. If you have the true yearning for the Divine, as you have undoubtedly in your soul, it is not by yielding to vital weakness that you will show it but by persisting, whatever the time and the difficulties, till it is achieved. You have promised to do that and I again recall you to your promise. Nirvana itself cannot be so achieved, but only by rising above all other desires and attachments until one has the supreme liberation and peace. Ramana Maharshi himself would tell you that and I suppose you can believe him if you cannot believe me.

It is difficult for me to say anything else since you have told me that no words of mine have any truth or value and that all my experiences also are subjective delusions without any truth or value. I suppose all spiritual or inner experiences can be denounced as merely subjective and delusive. But to the spiritual seeker even the smallest inner experience is a thing of value. I stand for the Truth I hold in me and I would still stand for it even if it had no chance whatever of outward fulfilment in this life. I should go on with it even if all here abandoned and repudiated me and denounced it to the world as a delusion and a folly. I have never disguised from myself the difficulties of what I have undertaken, it is not difficulties or the threat of failure that can deter me.

I hope however that you will get over this attack and see things one day as all the past seekers of the Divine have seen it, viz. that what one seeks is so precious and such a supreme thing
that a whole lifetime of effort however arduous or painful is not by any means too much to give to it. I say nothing else since you say that words of encouragement from me can have no value for you. But this at least is a thing that is true and that others whose spiritual experience and greatness cannot be disputed would tell you.

If you have the love for me you speak of — I will say nothing of mine for you, since you do not seem to believe much in it — you will listen to what I say and renew and carry out your promise to go through with your quest to the end with patience and courage.

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To characterise suicide as a willed withdrawal from life is the most astounding statement that would not bear a moment’s scrutiny. Suicide is accompanied in most cases by a morbid feeling of disappointment with life, a violent revolt against what is considered the imposition of an unjust providence or an adverse malignant fate. It has nothing of the sense of freedom behind it, no knowledge of the play of forces behind the exterior life, no means of mastering them or using them as stepping-stones to a higher freedom, a greater destiny. The calm poise of the soul, the peace that surpasseth understanding are not his. He is moved by dark forces who hold him completely in their grip. The sense of freedom of which he vaunts is the conjuring trick of the black magician by which he is deluded and dragged to a greater degradation. That is why it is said in the Upanishads that those who slay themselves enter into blind worlds of darkness. A violent exit by suicide is an act of excessive egoism, not of freedom.

The true freedom is found in unity with God and in the abiding sense of immortality, when the soul has risen above the bondage of his lower nature, and from the spirit heights of his being can survey his actions seated in a calm, untouched, unmoved by happenings in Time.

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Suicide is never the right thing to do, but its psychic consequences can be mitigated by the spirit in which it is done or if some feeling of sacrifice or self-offering enters into it as in the case of the Sati. It is always possible to help departed souls in their passage if one has the necessary psychic feeling towards them and the psychic force to make it effective. Contact can also be maintained so long as this passage does not carry them beyond the borders of the communication possible or into the region of psychic sleep or trance in which they remain within themselves and prepare their new birth in future.

The experiences related are of a high character and show an advanced state of the consciousness. The overhead station especially is not common and is usually attained only after a considerable psychic and spiritual growth. It is always possible indeed to ascend and descend in the consciousness reaching very high in planes above the head but usually one does not stay there.

There are always two things possible for the spiritual seeker, remain among others and then they can act, as she puts it, as a ferment, the other to congregate together and even to form a separate body for a common sadhana or for a common work or both as in this Ashram. Which is to be done depends on the urge of the spirit within or on a call from above.

Well, that [the quietude of death] is not the right kind of quietude. The peace of Nirvana would have some meaning in it, but death into the quietness of exhausted Prakriti is no release at all.

The real rest\(^3\) is in the inner life founded in peace and silence and absence of desire. There is no other rest — for without that the machine goes on whether one is interested in it or not. The inner mukti is the only remedy.

\(^3\) The correspondent expressed a desire for “the long rest that is one’s due after death”. — Ed.