

## Chapter Five

# Creative Activity

### The Arts and the Spiritual Life

There is no incompatibility between spirituality and creative activity — they can be united.

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Any activity can be taken as part of the sadhana if it is offered to the Divine or done with the consciousness or faith that it is done by the Divine Power. That is the important point.

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Literature, poetry, science and other studies can be a preparation of the consciousness for life. When one does Yoga they can become part of the sadhana only if done for the Divine or taken up by the Divine Force, but then one should not want to be a poet for the sake of being a poet only, or for fame, applause, etc.

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The spiritual life and one's own inner psychic and spiritual change should be the first preoccupation of a sadhak — poetry or painting is something quite subordinate and even then it should be done not to be a great poet or artist but as a help to the inner sadhana. It is time that everyone got away from the vital view of things to the psychic and spiritual on which alone can stand Yoga and the spiritual life.

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Every artist almost (there are rare exceptions) has got something of the “public” man in him, in his vital physical parts, the need of the stimulus of an audience, social applause, satisfied vanity or fame. That must go absolutely if he wants to be a Yogi and

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his art a service not of man or of his own ego but of the Divine.

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Well, that [*acting as a great musician etc.*] is an almost universal human weakness, especially with artists, poets, musicians and the whole splendid tribe — I have known even great Yogis suffer from just a touch of it! If one can see mentally the humour of it, it will fall off in the end.

### Literature

To be a literary man is not a spiritual aim; but to use literature as a means of spiritual expression is another matter. Even to make expression a vehicle of a superior power helps to open the consciousness. The harmonising rests on that principle.

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A “literary man” is one who loves literature and literary activity for their own separate sake. A Yogi who writes is not a literary man for he writes only what the inner Will and Word wants him to express. He is a channel and an instrument of something greater than his own literary personality.

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The use of your writing is to keep you in touch with the inner source of inspiration and intuition, so as to wear thin the crude external crust in the consciousness and encourage the growth of the inner being.

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Mother does not disapprove of your writing the book — what she does not like is your being so lost in it that you can do nothing else. You must be master of what you do and not possessed by it. She quite agrees to your finishing and offering the book on your birthday if that can be done. But you must not be carried away — you must keep your full contact with higher things.

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I repeat that we do not object to your writing — whether it be poetry or short stories or novels. What we felt was that this kind of total absorption and possession by it was not good for your spiritual condition and that it put a lesser thing in front, even occupying the *whole* front of the consciousness for most of the time instead of putting it in its proper place in a sound spiritual harmony.

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You can try [*writing a novel*], if you like. The difficulty is that the subject matter of a novel belongs mostly to the outer consciousness, so that a lowering or externalising can easily come. This apart from the difficulty of keeping the inner poise when putting the mind into outer work. If you could get an established poise within, then it would be possible to do any work without disturbing or lowering the consciousness.

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As for the French writing, you should not think so much of expressing things — it does not matter whether others have written the same things and done it better. What you should aim at is simply to learn to write French perfectly, to get full use of the French language as an instrument. If the Force wants to express anything through you hereafter or not, is a thing you should leave to the Divine Will; once you give yourself into its hands in the true consciousness, it will know what to do or not to do through you and will make full use of whatever instrumentation you can put at its disposal.

### Painting

Painting also is sadhana; so it is perfectly possible to make them one. It is a matter of dedicating the painting and feeling the force that makes you paint as the Mother's force.

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Of course everybody is here for Yoga and not for painting.

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Painting or any other activity has to be made here a part of Yoga and cannot be pursued for its own sake. If it stands insuperably in the way, then it has to be given up; but there is no reason why it should if it be pursued in the proper spirit, as a field or aid for spiritual growth, or as a work done for the Mother.

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You have painting and music in you and if you apply yourself they will develop in you. Only it is best to do it as an instrument of the Mother and as an offering to her, and not allow any personal desire for fame or appreciation by others or any personal pride to be the motives — for it is that that gives trouble. All work done as an offering is a great help and does not give trouble.

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What do you mean by vital excitement [*while painting*]? There is an intensity and enthusiasm of the vital without which it would be difficult to do any poem, picture or music of a creative kind. That intensity is not harmful.

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You have been progressing of course, but what Mother told you and tells everyone is true that to be a real artist needs hard work for years together. But your mistake is to put stress on these things and get discouraged by any check or difficulty in them. The one thing to be done is to open your consciousness to what is coming down, to let the change operate so that the consciousness becomes a consciousness of peace and light and power and joy full of the Divine Presence. When that is there, then what the Divine wants to get done through you or developed in you will be done or developed with a rapidity and perfection which at present is impossible. The one thing needful first, all the rest is only now a field of exercise for the development of the one thing needful.

### Singing

What you write about the singing is perfectly correct. You sing your best only when you forget yourself and let it come out from within without thinking of the need of excellence or the impression it may make. The famous singer should indeed disappear into the past, — it is only so that the inner singer can take her place.

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I meant exactly the same thing as when I wrote to you that the “famous singer” must disappear and the “inner singer” take her place. “The old psychological lines” means the mental and vital aesthetic source of the singing, the desire of fame or success, singing for an audience — the singing must come from the soul within and it must be for the Divine. . . .

As for your singing, I was not speaking of any new creation from the aesthetic point of view, but of the spiritual change — what form it takes must depend on what you find *within* you when the deeper basis is there.

I do not see any necessity for giving up singing altogether; I only meant, — it is the logical conclusion from what I have written to you not now only but before, — that the inner change must be the first consideration and the rest must arise out of that. If singing to an audience pulls you out of the inner condition, then you could postpone that and sing for yourself and the Divine until you are able, even in facing an audience, to forget the audience. If you are troubled by failure or exalted by success, that also you must overcome.