Surrender and Opening

The whole principle of this Yoga is to give oneself entirely to the Divine alone and to nobody and nothing else, and to bring down into ourselves by union with the Divine Mother all the transcendent light, power, wideness, peace, purity, Truth-consciousness and Ananda of the Supramental Divine.

* Radha is the personification of the absolute love for the Divine, total and integral in all parts of the being from the highest spiritual to the physical, bringing the absolute self-giving and total consecration of all the being and calling down into the body and the most material nature the supreme Ananda.

* Purity is to accept no other influence but only the influence of the Divine.

* Faithfulness is to admit and to manifest no other movements but only the movements prompted and guided by the Divine. (The Mother)

* Sincerity means to lift all the movements of the being to the level of the highest consciousness and realisation already attained. Sincerity exacts the unification and harmonisation of the whole being in all its parts and movements around the central Divine Will. (The Mother)

* The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda.

* Talk of surrender or a mere idea or tepid wish for integral consecration will not do; there must be the push for a radical and total change.

It is not by taking a mere mental attitude that this can be done or even by any number of inner experiences which leave the outer man as he was. It is this outer man who has to open, to surrender and to change. His every least movement, habit, action has to be surrendered, seen, held up and exposed to the divine Light, offered to the divine Force for its old forms and motives to be destroyed and the divine Truth and the action of the transforming consciousness of the Divine Mother to take their place.

* There is not much spiritual meaning in keeping open to the Mother if you withhold your surrender. Self-giving or surrender is demanded of those who practise this Yoga, because without such a progressive surrender of the being it is quite impossible to get anywhere near the goal. To keep open means to call in her Force to work in you, and if you do not surrender to it, it amounts to not allowing
the Force to work in you at all or else only on condition that it will work in the way you want and not in its own way which is the way of the Divine Truth. A suggestion of this kind is usually made by some adverse Power or by some egoistic element of mind or vital which wants the Grace or the Force, but only in order to use it for its own purpose, and is not willing to live for the Divine Purpose, – it is willing to take from the Divine all it can get, but not to give itself to the Divine. The soul, the true being, on the contrary, turns towards the Divine and is not only willing but eager and happy to surrender.

In this Yoga one is supposed to go beyond every mental idealistic culture. Ideas and Ideals belong to the mind and are half-truths only; the mind too is, more often than not, satisfied with merely having an ideal, with the pleasure of idealising, while life remains always the same, untransformed or changed only a little and mostly in appearance. The spiritual seeker does not turn aside from the pursuit of realisation to mere idealising; not to idealise, but to realise the Divine Truth is always his aim, either beyond or in life also – and in the latter case it is necessary to transform mind and life which cannot be done without surrender to the action of the Divine Force, the Mother.

To seek after the Impersonal is the way of those who want to withdraw from life, and usually they try by their own effort, and not by an opening of themselves to a superior Power or by the way of surrender; for the Impersonal is not something that guides or helps, but something to be attained and it leaves each man to attain it according to the way and capacity of his nature. On the other hand, by an opening and surrender to the Mother one can realise the Impersonal and every other aspect of Truth also.

The surrender must necessarily be progressive. No one can make the complete surrender from the beginning, so it is quite natural that when one looks into oneself, one should find its absence. That is no reason why the principle of surrender should not be accepted and carried out steadily from stage to stage, from field to field, applying it successively to all the parts of the nature.

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In the early part of the Sadhana – and by early I do not mean a short part – effort is indispensable. Surrender of course, but surrender is not a thing that is done in a day. The mind has its ideas and it clings to them; the human vital resists surrender, for what it calls surrender in the early stages is a doubtful kind of self-giving with a demand in it; the physical consciousness is like a stone and what it calls surrender is often no more than inertia. It is only the psychic that knows how to surrender and the psychic is usually very much veiled in the beginning. When the psychic awakes, it can bring a sudden and true surrender of the whole being, for the difficulty of the rest is rapidly dealt with and disappears. But till then effort is indispensable. Or else it is necessary till the Force comes flooding down into the being from above and takes up the Sadhana, does it for one more and more and leaves less and less to individual effort – but even then, if not effort, at least aspiration and vigilance are needed till the possession of mind, will, life and body by the Divine Power is complete. I have dealt with this subject, I think, in one of the chapters of “The Mother”.

On the other hand, there are some people who start with a genuine and dynamic will for a total surrender. It is those who are governed by the psychic or are governed by a clear and enlightened mental will which, having once accepted surrender as the law of the Sadhana, will stand no nonsense about it and insists on the other parts of the being following its direction. Here there is still effort; but it is so ready and spontaneous and has so much the sense of a greater Force behind it that the Sadhak hardly feels that he is making an effort at all. In the contrary case of a will in mind or vital to retain self-will, a reluctance to give up your independent movement, there must be struggle and endeavour until the wall between the instrument in front and the Divinity behind or above is broken. No rule can be laid down which applies without distinction to everybody – the variations in human nature are too great to be covered by a single trenchant rule.

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There is a state in which the Sadhak is conscious of the Divine Force working in him or of its results at least and does not obstruct its descent or its action by his own mental activities, vital restlessness or physical obscurity and inertia. That is openness to the Divine. Surrender is the best way of opening; but aspiration and quietness can do it up to a certain point so long as there is not the surrender. Surrender means to consecrate everything in oneself to the Divine, to offer all one is and has, not to insist on one’s ideas, desires, habits, etc., but to allow the divine Truth to replace them by its knowledge, will and
action everywhere.

* Always keep in touch with the Divine Force. The best thing for you is to do that simply and allow it to do its own work; wherever necessary, it will take hold of the inferior energies and purify them; at other times it will empty you of them and fill you with itself. But if you let your mind take the lead and discuss and decide what is to be done, you will lose touch with the Divine Force and the lower energies will begin to act for themselves and all go into confusion and a wrong movement.

* Then only can the psychic being fully open when the Sadhak 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.

* It is no part of this Yoga to dry up the heart; but the emotions must be turned towards the Divine. There may be short periods in which the heart is quiescent, turned away from the ordinary feelings and waiting for the inflow from above; but such states are not states of dryness but of silence and peace. The heart in this Yoga should in fact be the main centre of concentration until the consciousness rises above.

* All attachment is a hindrance to Sadhana. Goodwill you should have for all, psychic kindness for all, but no vital attachment.

* The love of the Sadhak should be for the Divine. It is only when he has that fully that he can love others in the right way.

* There is no reason why one should not receive through the thinking mind, as one receives through the vital, the emotional and the body. The thinking mind is as capable of receiving as these are, and, since it has to be transformed as well as the rest, it must be trained to receive, otherwise no transformation of it could take place.

   It is the ordinary unenlightened activity of the intellect that is an obstacle to spiritual experience, just as the ordinary unregenerated activity of the vital or the obscure stupidly obstructive consciousness of the body is an obstacle. What the Sadhak has to be specially warned against in the wrong processes of the intellect is, first, any mistaking of mental ideas and impressions or intellectual conclusions for realisation; secondly, the restless activity of the mere mind which disturbs the spontaneous accuracy of psychic and spiritual experience and gives no room for the descent of the true illuminating knowledge or else deforms it as soon as it touches or even before it fully touches the human mental plane. There are also of course the usual vices of the intellect, – its leaning towards sterile doubt instead of luminous reception and calm enlightened discrimination; its arrogance claiming
to judge things that are beyond it, unknown to it, too deep for it by standards drawn from its own limited experience; its attempts to explain the supraphysical by the physical or its demand for the proof of higher and occult things by the criteria proper to Matter and mind in Matter; others also too many to enumerate here. Always it is substituting its own representations and constructions and opinions for the true knowledge. But if the intellect is surrendered, open, quiet, receptive, there is no reason why it should not be a means of reception of the Light or an aid to the experience of spiritual states and to the fullness of an inner change.

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The turmoil of mental (intellectual) activity has also to be silenced like the vital activity of desire in order that the calm and peace may be complete. Knowledge has to come but from above. In this calm the ordinary mental activities like the ordinary vital activities become surface movements with which the silent inner self is not connected. It is the liberation necessary in order that the true knowledge and the true life-activity may replace or transform the activities of the ignorance.

The soul, the psychic being is in direct touch with the divine Truth, but it is hidden in man by the mind, the vital being and the physical nature. One may practise Yoga and get illuminations in the mind and the reason; one may conquer power and luxuriate in all kinds of experiences in the vital; one may establish even surprising physical Siddhis; but if the true soul-power behind does not manifest, if the psychic nature does not come into the front, nothing genuine has been done. In this Yoga the psychic being is that which opens the rest of the nature to the true supramental light and finally to the supreme Ananda. Mind can open by itself to its own higher reaches; it can still itself and widen into the Impersonal; it may too spiritualise itself in some kind of static liberation or Nirvana; but the Supramental cannot find a sufficient base in a spiritualised mind alone. If the inmost soul is awakened, if there is a new birth out of the mere mental, vital and physical into the psychic consciousness, then this Yoga can be done; otherwise (by the sole power of the mind or any other part) it is impossible.... If there is a refusal of the psychic new birth, a refusal to become the child new born from the Mother, owing to attachment to intellectual knowledge or mental ideas or to some vital desire, then there will be a failure in the Sadhana.

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I have said that the most decisive way for the Peace or the Silence to come is by a descent from above. In fact, in reality though not always in appearance, that is how they always come; – not in appearance always, because the Sadhak is not always conscious of the process; he feels the peace settling in him or at least manifesting, but he has not been conscious how and whence it came. Yet it is the truth that all that belongs to the higher consciousness comes from above, not only the spiritual peace and silence, but the Light, the Power, the Knowledge, the higher seeing and thought, the Ananda come from above. It is also possible that up to a certain point they may come from within, but this is because the psychic being is open to them directly and they come first there and then reveal themselves in the rest of the being from the psychic or by its coming into the front. A disclosure from within or a descent from above, these are the two sovereign ways of the Yoga-Siddhi. An effort of the external surface mind or emotions, a Tapasya of some kind may seem to build up some of these things, but the results are usually uncertain and fragmentary, compared to the result of the two radical ways. That is why in this Yoga we insist always on an “opening” – an opening inwards of the inner mind, vital, physical to the inmost part of us, the psychic, and an opening upwards to what is above the mind – as indispensable for the fruits of the Sadhana.

The underlying reason for this is that this little mind, vital and body which we call ourselves is only a surface movement and not our "self" at all. It is an external bit of personality put forward for one brief life, for the play of the Ignorance. It is equipped with an ignorant mind stumbling about in search of fragments of truth, an ignorant vital rushing about in search of fragments of pleasure, an obscure and mostly subconscious physical receiving the impacts of things and suffering rather than possessing a resultant pain or pleasure. All that is accepted until the mind gets disgusted and starts looking about for the real Truth of itself and things, the vital gets disgusted and begins wondering whether there is not such a thing as real bliss and the physical gets tired and wants liberation from itself and its pains and pleasures. Then it is possible for the little ignorant bit of personality to get back to its real Self and with it to these greater things – or else to extinction of itself, Nirvana.
The real Self is not anywhere on the surface but deep within and above. Within is the soul supporting an inner mind, inner vital, inner physical in which there is a capacity for universal wideness and with it for the things now asked for – direct contact with the truth of self and things, taste of a universal bliss, liberation from the imprisoned smallness and sufferings of the gross physical body. Even in Europe the existence of something behind the surface is now very frequently admitted, but its nature is mistaken and it is called subconscient or subliminal, while really it is very conscious in its own way and not subliminal but only behind the veil. It is, according to our psychology, connected with the small outer personality by certain centres of consciousness of which we become aware by Yoga. Only a little of the inner being escapes through these centres into the outer life, but that little is the best part of ourselves and responsible for our art, poetry, philosophy, ideals, religious aspirations, efforts at knowledge and perfection. But the inner centres are for the most part closed or asleep – to open them and make them awake and active is one aim of Yoga. As they open, the powers and possibilities of the inner being also are aroused in us; we awake first to a larger consciousness and then to a cosmic consciousness; we are no longer little separate personalities with limited lives but centres of a universal action and in direct contact with cosmic forces. Moreover, instead of being unwillingly playthings of the latter, as is the surface person, we can become to a certain extent conscious and masters of the play of nature – how far this goes depending on the development of the inner being and its opening upward to the higher spiritual levels. At the same time the opening of the heart centre releases the psychic being which proceeds to make us aware of the Divine within us and of the higher Truth above us.

For the highest spiritual Self is not even behind our personality and bodily existence but is above it and altogether exceeds it. The highest of the inner centres is in the head, just as the deepest is the heart; but the centre which opens directly to the Self is above the head, altogether outside the physical body, in what is called the subtle body, sūksma śarīra. This Self has two aspects and the results of realising it correspond to these two aspects. One is static, a condition of wide peace, freedom, silence: the silent Self is unaffected by any action or experience; it impartially supports them but does not seem to originate them at all, rather to stand back detached or unconcerned, adāsina. The other aspect is dynamic and that is experienced as a cosmic Self or Spirit which not only supports but originates and contains the whole cosmic action – not only that part of it which concerns our physical selves but also all that is beyond it – this world and all other worlds, the supraphysical as well as the physical ranges of the universe. Moreover, we feel the Self as one in all; but also we feel it as above all, transcendent, surpassing all individual birth or cosmic existence. To get into the universal Self – one in all – is to be liberated from ego; ego either becomes a small instrumental circumstance in the consciousness or even disappears from our consciousness altogether. That is the extinction or Nirvana of the ego. To get into the transcendent self above all makes us capable of transcending altogether even cosmic consciousness and action – it can be the way to that complete liberation from the world-existence which is called also extinction, laya, mokṣa, nirvāṇa.

It must be noted however that the opening upward does not necessarily lead to peace, silence and Nirvana only. The Sadhak becomes aware not only of a great, eventually an infinite peace, silence, wideness above us, above the head as it were and extending into all physical and supra-physical space, but also he can become aware of other things — a vast Force in which is all power, a vast Light in which is all knowledge, a vast Ananda in which is all bliss and rapture. At first they appear as something essential, indeterminate, absolute, simple, kevala: a Nirvana into any of these things seems possible. But we can come to see too that this Force contains all forces, this Light all lights, this Ananda all joy and bliss possible. And all this can descend into us. Any of them and all of them can come down, not peace alone; only the safest is to bring down first an absolute calm and peace, for that makes the descent of the rest more secure; otherwise it may be difficult for the external nature to contain or bear so much Force, Light, Knowledge or Ananda. All these things together make what we call the higher spiritual or Divine Consciousness. The psychic opening through the heart puts us primarily into connection with the individual Divine, the Divine in his inner relation with us; it is especially the source of love and Bhakti. This upward opening puts us into direct relation with the whole Divine and can create in us the divine consciousness and a new birth or births of the spirit.

When the Peace is established, this higher or Divine Force from above can descend and work in us. It descends usually first into the head and liberates the inner mind centres, then into the heart centre and liberates fully the psychic and emotional being, then into the navel and other vital centres and liberates the inner vital, then into the Muladhara and below and liberates the inner physical being. It works at the same time for perfection as well as liberation; it takes up the whole nature part by part and deals with it, rejecting what has to be rejected, sublimating what has to be sublimated, creating
what has to be created. It integrates, harmonises, establishes a new rhythm in the nature. It can bring down too a higher and yet higher force and range of the higher nature until, if that be the aim of the Sadhana, it becomes possible to bring down the supramental force and existence. All this is prepared, assisted, farthered by the work of the psychic being in the heart centre; the more it is open, in front, active, the quicker, safer, easier the working of the Force can be. The more love and Bhakti and surrender grow in the heart, the more rapid and perfect becomes the evolution of the Sadhana. For the descent and transformation imply at the same time an increasing contact and union with the Divine.

That is the fundamental rationale of the Sadhana. It will be evident that the two most important things here are the opening of the heart centre and the opening of the mind centres to all that is behind and above them. For the heart opens to the psychic being and the mind centres open to the higher consciousness and the nexus between the psychic being and the higher consciousness is the principal means of the Siddhi. The first opening is effected by a concentration in the heart, a call to the Divine to manifest within us and through the psychic to take up and lead the whole nature. Aspiration, prayer, Bhakti, love, surrender are the main supports of this part of the Sadhana – accompanied by a rejection of all that stands in the way of what we aspire for. The second opening is effected by a concentration of the consciousness in the head (afterwards, above it) and an aspiration and call and a sustained will for the descent of the divine Peace, Power, Light, Knowledge, Ananda into the being – the Peace first or the Peace and Force together. Some indeed receive Light first or Ananda first or some sudden pouring down of Knowledge. With some there is first an opening which reveals to them a vast infinite Silence, Force, Light or Bliss above them and afterwards either they ascend to that or these things begin to descend into the lower nature. With others there is either the descent, first into the head, then down to the heart level, then to the navel and below and through the whole body, or else an inexplicable opening – without any sense of descent of peace, light, wideness or power, or else a horizontal opening into the cosmic consciousness or in a suddenly widened mind an outburst of knowledge. Whatever comes has to be welcomed – for there is no absolute rule for all – but if the peace has not come first, care must be taken not to swell oneself in exultation or lose the balance. The capital movement however is when the Divine Force or Shakti, the power of the Mother comes down and takes hold, for then the organisation of the consciousness begins and the larger foundation of the Yoga.

The result of the concentration is not usually immediate though to some there comes a swift and sudden out-flowering; but with most there is a time longer or shorter of adaptation or preparation, especially if the nature has not been prepared already to some extent by aspiration and Tapasya. The coming of the result can sometimes be aided by associating with the concentration one of the processes of the old Yoga. There is the Adwaita process of the way of knowledge — one rejects from oneself the identification with the mind, vital, body, saying continually “I am not the mind”, “I am not the vital”, “I am not the body”, seeing these things as separate from one’s real self – and after a time one feels all the mental, vital, physical processes and the very sense of mind, vital, body becoming externalised, an outer action, while within and detached from them there grows the sense of a separate self-existent being which opens into the realisation of the cosmic and transcendent spirit. There is also the method – a very powerful method – of the Sankhyas, the separation of the Purusha and the Prakriti. One enforces on the mind the position of the Witness – all action of mind, vital, physical becomes an outer play which is not myself or mine, but belongs to Nature and has been enforced on an outer me. I am the witness Purusha; I am silent, detached, not bound by any of these things. There grows up in consequence a division in the being; the Sadhak feels within him the growth of a calm silent separate consciousness which feels itself quite apart from the surface play of the mind and the vital and physical Nature. Usually when this takes place, it is possible very rapidly to bring down the peace of the higher consciousness and the action of the higher Force and the full march of the Yoga. But often the Force itself comes down first in response to the concentration and call and then, if these things are necessary, it does them and uses any other means or process that is helpful or indispensable.

One thing more. In this process of the descent from above and the working it is most important not to rely entirely on oneself, but to rely on the guidance of the Guru and to refer all that happens to his judgment and arbitration and decision. For it often happens that the forces of the lower nature are stimulated and excited by the descent and want to mix with it and turn it to their profit. It often happens too that some Power or Powers undivine in their nature present themselves as the Supreme Lord or as the Divine Mother and claim the being’s service and surrender. If these things are accepted, there will be an extremely disastrous consequence. If indeed there is the assent of the Sadhak to the Divine working alone and the submission or surrender to that guidance, then all can go smoothly. This assent and a rejection of all egoistic forces or forces that appeal to the ego are the safeguard throughout
the Sadhana. But the ways of nature are full of snares, the disguises of the ego are innumerable, the illusions of the Powers of Darkness, Rakshasi Maya, are extraordinarily skilful; the reason is an insufficient guide and often turns traitor; vital desire is always with us tempting to follow any alluring call. This is the reason why in this Yoga we insist so much on what we call Samarpana – rather inadequately rendered by the English word surrender. If the heart centre is fully opened and the psychic is always in control, then there is no question; all is safe. But the psychic can at any moment be veiled by a lower upsurge. It is only a few who are exempt from these dangers and it is precisely those to whom surrender is easily possible. The guidance of one who himself is by identity or represents the Divine is in this difficult endeavour imperative and indispensable.

What I have written may help you to get some clear idea of what I mean by the central process of the Yoga. I have written at some length but, naturally, could cover only the fundamental things. Whatever belongs to circumstance and detail must arise as one works out the method, or rather as it works itself out – for the last is what usually happens when there is an effective beginning of the action of the Sadhana.

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Then as to concentration. Ordinarily the consciousness is spread out everywhere, dispersed, running in this or that direction, after this subject and that object in multitude. When anything has to be done of a sustained nature the first thing one does is to draw back all this dispersed consciousness and concentrate. It is then, if one looks closely, bound to be concentrated in one place and on one occupation, subject or object – as when you are composing a poem or a botanist is studying a flower. The place is usually somewhere in the brain if it is the thought, in the heart if it is the feeling in which one is concentrated. The Yogic concentration is simply an extension and intensification of the same thing. It may be on an object as when one does Tratak on a shining point – then one has to concentrate so that one sees only that point and has no other thought than that. It may be on an idea or word or a name, the idea of the Divine, the word OM, the name Krishna, or a combination of idea and word or idea and name. But further in Yoga one also concentrates in a particular place. There is the famous rule of concentrating between the eyebrows – the centre of the inner mind, of occult vision, of the will is there. What you do is to think firmly from there on whatever you make the object of your concentration or else try to see the image of it from there. If you succeed in this then after a time you feel that your whole consciousness is centred there in that place – of course for the time being. After doing it for some time and often it becomes easy and normal.

I hope this is clear. Well, in this Yoga, you do the same, not necessarily at that particular spot between the eyebrows, but anywhere in the head or at the centre of the chest where the physiologists have fixed the cardiac centre. Instead of concentrating on an object, you concentrate in the head in a will, a call for the descent of the peace above or, as some do, an opening of the unseen lid and an ascent of the consciousness above. In the heart centre one concentrates in an aspiration, for an opening, for the presence of the living image of the Divine there or whatever else is the object. There may be Japa of a name but, if so, there must also be a concentration on it and the name must repeat itself there in the heart centre.

It may be asked what becomes of the rest of the consciousness when there is this local concentration? Well, it either falls silent as in any concentration or, if it does not, then thoughts or other things may move about, as if outside, but the concentrated part does not attend to them or notice. That is when the concentration is reasonably successful.

One has not to fatigue oneself at first by long concentration if one is not accustomed, for then in a jaded mind it loses its power and value. One can relax and meditate instead of concentrating. It is only as the concentration becomes normal that one can go on for a longer and longer time.