

Chapter One

Concentration and Meditation

The Meaning of Concentration and Meditation

Concentration, for our Yoga, means when the consciousness is fixed in a particular state (e.g. peace) or movement (e.g. aspiration, will, coming into contact with the Mother, taking the Mother's name); meditation is when the inner mind is looking at things to get the right knowledge.

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Concentration means fixing the consciousness in one place or on one object and in a single condition. Meditation can be diffusive, e.g. thinking about the Divine, receiving impressions and discriminating, watching what goes on in the nature and acting upon it etc.

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Concentration is a gathering together of the consciousness and either centralising at one point or turning on a single object, e.g. the Divine — there can also be a gathered condition throughout the whole being, not at a point. In meditation it is not indispensable to gather like this, one can simply remain with a quiet mind thinking of one subject or observing what comes in the consciousness and dealing with it.

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Meditation means thinking on one subject in a concentrated way. In concentration proper there is not a series of thoughts, but the mind is silently fixed on one object, name, idea, place etc.

There are other kinds of concentration, e.g. concentrating the whole consciousness in one place, as between the eyebrows, in the heart, etc. One can also concentrate to get rid of thought altogether and remain in a complete silence.

The Role of Concentration and Meditation (Dhyana) in Sadhana

In the beginning for a long time concentration is necessary even by effort because the nature, the consciousness are not ready. Even then the more quiet and natural the concentration, the better. But when the consciousness and nature are ready, then concentration must become spontaneous and easily possible without effort at all times. Even at last it becomes the natural and permanent condition of the being—it is then no longer concentration, but the settled poise of the soul in the Divine.

It is true that to be concentrated and do an outward action at the same time is not at first possible. But that too becomes possible. Either the consciousness divides into two parts, one the inner poised in the Divine, the other the outer doing the outer work—or else the whole is so poised and the force does the work through the passive instrument.

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Concentration is necessary. By dhyana you awake the inner being; by concentration in life, in work, in the outer consciousness you make the outer being also fit to receive the Divine Light and Force.

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It is in the waking consciousness that all has to be realised. But that cannot be done without a full preparation in the inner being and it is this preparation that is being done for you in *dhyāna*.

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You have not to remain in dhyana all the time, but to bring into the waking state the consciousness you get there and you have to live in that all the time.

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It is very good, and by regular meditation you are sure to make much progress. But I do not think to spend all the night in

meditation would be good. The body needs sleep also. One hour meditation daily is already a very good result and it can be increased slowly to two.

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Certainly, if all one's life one did nothing but meditate, it would be a one-sided affair. But at times to give the first place or a lion's share to meditation may be necessary. It is especially when things are coming down and have to be fixed.

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The ease and peace are felt very deep and far within because they are in the psychic and the psychic is very deep within us, covered over by the mind and vital. When you meditate you open to the psychic, become aware of your psychic consciousness deep within and feel these things. In order that this ease and peace and happiness may become strong and stable and felt in all the being and in the body, you have to go still deeper within and bring out the full force of the psychic into the physical. This can most easily be done by regular concentration and meditation with the aspiration for this true consciousness. It can be done by work also, by dedication, by doing the work for the Divine only without thought of self and keeping the idea of consecration to the Mother always in the heart. But this is not easy to do perfectly.

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Sir, is the Presence [*of the Divine*] of a physical nature or a spiritual fact? And is the physical sense accustomed or able to see or feel spiritual things — a spiritual Presence, a non-material Form? To see the Brahman everywhere is not possible unless you develop the inner vision — so to do that you have to concentrate. To see non-material forms is indeed possible for a few, because they have the gift by nature, but most can't do it without developing the subtle sight. It is absurd to expect the Divine to manifest his Presence without your taking any trouble to see it, — you have to concentrate.

The Object of Meditation

What do you call meditation? Shutting the eyes and concentrating? It is only one method for calling down the true consciousness. To join with the true consciousness or feel its descent is the only thing important and if it comes without the orthodox method, as it always did with me, so much the better. Meditation is only a means or device, the true movement is when even walking, working or speaking one is still in sadhana.

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What is most important [*in meditation*] is the change of consciousness of which this feeling of oneness is a part. The going deep in meditation is only a means and it is not always necessary if the great experiences come easily without it.

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The best help for concentration is to receive the Mother's calm and peace into your mind. It is there above you — only the mind and its centres have to open to it. It is what the Mother is pushing upon you in the evening meditation.

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The object of meditation is to open to the Mother and grow through many progressive experiences into a higher consciousness in union with the Divine.

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To enter into a deeper or higher consciousness or for that deeper or higher consciousness to descend into you — that is the true success of meditation.

Meditation Not Necessary for All

One can have no fixed hours of meditation and yet be doing sadhana.

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Meditation is not indispensable. There are some who do not meditate and yet progress.

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Then how is it [*meditation*] necessary for all, if some are asked not to do it? Much meditation is for those who can meditate much. It does not follow that because such meditation is good, therefore nobody should do anything else.

Methods of Meditation and Concentration

The attitude of spiritual meditation is to concentrate so as to receive or attain the spiritual truth—what means one takes depends upon the way, the path, the person.

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If the difficulty in meditation is that thoughts of all kinds come in, that is not due to hostile forces but to the ordinary nature of the human mind. All sadhaks have this difficulty and with many it lasts for a very long time. There are several ways of getting rid of it. One of them is to look at the thoughts and observe what is the nature of the human mind as they show it but not to give any sanction and to let them run down till they come to a standstill—this is a way recommended by Vivekananda in his *Rajayoga*. Another is to look at the thoughts as not one's own, to stand back as the witness Purusha and refuse the sanction—the thoughts are regarded as things coming from outside, from Prakriti, and they must be felt as if they were passers-by crossing the mind-space with whom one has no connection and in whom one takes no interest. In this way it usually happens that after a time the mind divides into two, a part which is the mental witness watching and perfectly undisturbed and quiet and a part which is the object of observation, the Prakriti part in which the thoughts cross or wander. Afterwards one can proceed to silence or quiet the Prakriti part also. There is a third, an active method by which one looks to see where the thoughts come from and finds they come not from oneself, but from outside the head as

it were; if one can detect them coming, then, *before they enter*, they have to be thrown away altogether. This is perhaps the most difficult way and not all can do it, but if it can be done it is the shortest and most powerful road to silence.

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If you try to apply everything you read, there will be no end to your new beginnings. One can stop thinking by rejecting the thoughts and in the silence discover oneself. One can do it by letting the thoughts run down while one detaches oneself from them. There are a number of other ways. This one related in Brunton's book seems to me the Adwaita-jnani method of separating oneself from body, vital, mind, by *viveka*, discrimination, "I am not the body, I am not the life, I am not the mind" till he gets to the self, separate from mind, life and body. That also is one way of doing it. There is also the separation of Purusha from Prakriti till one becomes the witness only and feels separate from all the activities as the Witness Consciousness. There are other methods also.

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The method of gathering of the mind is not an easy one. It is better to watch and separate oneself from the thoughts till one becomes aware of a quiet space within into which they come from outside.

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All thoughts really come from outside, but one is not conscious of their coming. You have become conscious of this movement. There are different ways of getting rid of them; one is to reject them one by one before they can come in; another is to look at them with detachment till they fade away.

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It is of course because of the old habit of the mental consciousness that it goes on receiving the thoughts from outside in spite of its being a fatigue — not that it wants them, but that they

are accustomed to come and the mind mechanically lets them in and attends to them by force of habit. This is always one of the chief difficulties in Yoga when the experiences have begun and the mind wants to be always either concentrated or quiet. Some do what you propose [*direct rejection of thoughts*] and after a time succeed in quieting the mind altogether or the silence comes down from above and does it. But often when one tries this, the thoughts become very active and resist the silencing process and that is very troublesome. Therefore many prefer to go on slowly letting the mind quiet down little by little, the quietness spreading and remaining for longer periods until the unwanted thoughts fall away or recede and the mind is left free for knowledge from within and above.

What you might do is to try and see what results — if the thoughts attack too much and trouble, you could stop — if the mind quiets down quickly or more and more, then continue.

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The mind is always in activity, but we do not observe fully what it is doing, but allow ourselves to be carried away in the stream of continual thinking. When we try to concentrate, this stream of self-moved mechanical thinking becomes prominent to our observation. It is the first normal obstacle (the other is sleep during meditation) to the effort towards Yoga.

The first thing to do is to realise that this thought-flow is not yourself, it is not you who are thinking, but thought that is going on in the mind. It is Prakriti with its thought-energy that is raising all this whirl of thought in you, imposing it on the Purusha. You as the Purusha must stand back as the witness observing the action, but refusing to identify yourself with it. The next thing is to exercise a control and reject the thoughts — though sometimes by the very act of detachment the thought-habit falls away or diminishes during the meditation and there is a sufficient silence or at any rate a quietude which makes it easy to reject the thoughts that come and fix oneself on the object of meditation. If one becomes aware of the thoughts as coming from outside, from the universal Nature, then one can throw

them away before they reach the mind; in that way the mind finally falls silent. If neither of these things happens, a persistent practice of rejection becomes necessary — there should be no struggle or wrestling with the thoughts, but only a quiet self-separation and refusal. Success does not come at first, but if consent is constantly withheld, the mechanical whirl eventually lessens and begins to die away and one can then have at will an inner quietude or silence.

It should be noted that the result of the Yogic processes is not, except in rare cases, immediate and one must apply them with patience till they give a result which is sometimes long in coming if there is much resistance in the outer nature.

How can you fix the mind on the higher Self so long as you have no consciousness or experience of it? You can only concentrate on the idea of the Self. Or else one can concentrate on the idea of the Divine or the Divine Mother or on an image or on the feeling of devotion, calling the presence in the heart or the Force to work in the mind and heart and body and liberate the consciousness and give the self-realisation. If you concentrate on the idea of the Self, it must be with the conception of the Self as something different from mind and its thoughts, the vital and its feelings, the body and its actions — something standing back from all these, something that you can come to feel concretely as an Existence or Consciousness, separate from all that yet freely pervading all without being involved in these things.

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You have to separate yourself from the mind also. You have to feel yourself even in the mental, vital, physical levels (not only above) a consciousness that is neither mind, life, nor body.

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For the buzz of the physical mind, reject it quietly, without getting disturbed, till it feels discouraged and retires shaking its head and saying, “This fellow is too calm and strong for me.” There are always two things that can rise up and assail the silence, — vital suggestions, the physical mind’s mechanical

recurrences. Calm rejection for both is the cure. There is a Purusha within who can dictate to the nature what it shall admit or exclude, but its will is a strong, quiet will; if one gets perturbed or agitated over the difficulties, then the will of the Purusha cannot act effectively as it would otherwise.

The dynamic realisation will probably take place when the higher consciousness comes fully down into the vital. When it comes into the mental it brings the peace of the Purusha and liberation and it may bring also knowledge. It is when it comes into the vital that the dynamic realisation becomes present and living.

Concentration on the Idea

If one concentrates on a thought or a word, one has to dwell on the essential idea contained in the word with the aspiration to feel the thing which it expresses.

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I have not the original chapter before me just now; but from the sentences quoted¹ it seems to be the essential mental Idea. As for instance in the method of Vedantic knowledge one concentrates on the idea of Brahman omnipresent — one looks at a tree or other surrounding objects with the idea that Brahman is there and the tree or object is only a form. After a time if the concentration is of the right kind, one begins to become aware of a presence, an existence, the physical tree form becomes a shell and that presence or existence is felt to be the only reality. The idea then drops, it is a direct vision of the thing that takes its place — there is no longer any necessity of concentrating on the

¹ *The correspondent sent to Sri Aurobindo a passage from The Synthesis of Yoga: "This concentration proceeds by the Idea . . . ; for it is through the Idea that the mental being rises beyond all expression to that which is expressed, to that of which the Idea itself is only the instrument. By concentration upon the Idea the mental existence which at present we are breaks open the barrier of our mentality and arrives at the state of consciousness, the state of being, the state of power of conscious-being and bliss of conscious-being to which the Idea corresponds and of which it is the symbol, movement and rhythm."* THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO, vol. 23, p. 321.

idea, one sees with a deeper consciousness, *sa paśyati*. It should be noted that this concentration on the idea is not mere thinking, *mananam* — it is an inner dwelling on the essence of the Idea.

Centres for Concentration

The nature of the meditation depends on the part of the being in which one is centred at the time. In the body (rather the subtle body than the physical, but connected with the corresponding parts in the gross physical body also) there are centres proper to each level of the being. There is a centre at the top of the head and above it which is that of the above-mind or higher consciousness; a centre in the forehead between the eyebrows which is that of the thinking mind, mental will, mental vision; a centre in the throat which is that of the expressive or externalising mind: these are the mental centres. Below comes the vital — the heart (emotional), the navel (the dynamic life-centre), another below the navel in the abdomen which is the lower or sensational vital centre. Finally, at the bottom of the spine is the Muladhara or physical centre. Behind the heart is the psychic centre. If one concentrates in the head as many do it is a mental-spiritual meditation one seeks for, if in the heart it is a psychic meditation; these are the usual places where one concentrates. But what rises up first or opens first may not be the mental or psychic, but the emotional or the vital; that depends on the nature — for whatever is easiest to open in it, is likely to open first. If it is in the vital, then the meditation tends to project the consciousness into the vital plane and its experiences. But from that one can get to the psychic by drawing more and more inwards, not getting absorbed into the vital experiences but separating oneself and looking at them with detachment as if one were deep inside and observing things outside oneself. Similarly one can get the mental experiences by concentrating in the thought and by it bringing a corresponding experience, e.g. the thought of all being the Brahman, or one can draw back from the thought also and observe one's own thoughts as outside

things until one enters into the silence and the pure spiritual experience.

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One can concentrate in any of the three centres which is easiest to the sadhak or gives most result. The power of the concentration in the heart-centre is to open that centre and by the power of aspiration, love, bhakti, surrender remove the veil which covers and conceals the soul and bring forward the soul or psychic being to govern the mind, life and body and turn and open them all — fully — to the Divine, removing all that is opposed to that turning and opening.

This is what is called in this Yoga the psychic transformation. The power of concentration above the head is to bring peace, silence, liberation from the body sense, the identification with mind and life and open the way for the lower (mental-vital-physical) consciousness to rise up to meet the higher Consciousness above and for the powers of the higher (spiritual or divine) Consciousness to descend into mind, life and body. This is what is called in this Yoga the spiritual transformation. If one begins with this movement, then the Power from above has in its descent to open all the centres (including the lowest centre) and to bring out the psychic being; for until that is done there is likely to be much difficulty and struggle of the lower consciousness obstructing, mixing with or even refusing the Divine Action from above. If the psychic being is once active this struggle and these difficulties can be greatly minimised.

The power of concentration in the eyebrows is to open the centre there, liberate the inner mind and vision and the inner or Yogic consciousness and its experiences and powers. From here also one can open upwards and act also in the lower centres; but the danger of this process is that one may get shut up in one's mental spiritual formations and not come out of them into the free and integral spiritual experience and knowledge and integral change of the being and nature.

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I was very glad to get your letter and especially to know that you are more at peace. That is what is first needed, the settling down of a natural peace and quiet in the nature — the spiritual peace is a bigger thing that can come afterwards.

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, found 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 but that. It may be on an idea or a 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, farther, 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 from 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 or 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 or 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.

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There is no harm in concentrating sometimes in the heart and sometimes above the head. But concentration in either place does not mean keeping the attention fixed on a particular spot; you have to take your station of consciousness in either place and concentrate there not on the place, but on the Divine. This can be done with eyes shut or with eyes open, according as it best suits you.

You can concentrate on the sun, but to concentrate on the Divine is better than to concentrate on the sun.

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You can concentrate the consciousness anywhere in any centre. You have only to think of yourself as centrally there and try to fix and keep that. A strain or any effort to do so is not necessary but a quiet and steady dwelling in the idea.

Most people associate consciousness with the brain or mind because that is the centre for intellectual thought and mental vision, but consciousness is not limited to that kind of thought or vision. It is everywhere in the system and there are several centres of it, e.g., the centre for inner concentration is not in the

brain but in the heart, — the originating centre of vital desire is still lower down.

The two main places where one can centre the consciousness for Yoga are in the head and in the heart — the mind-centre and the soul-centre.

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One has to open through concentration in the heart centre or above the head, in the former case to the psychic, in the latter to the higher Truth. But without the psychic preparation or at least a thorough purification of the being, the latter course is not safe.

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It may be better to concentrate in the heart rather than in the mind, offer yourself from there and call the Mother into the heart leaving the thoughts to fall silent of themselves. Otherwise with the present method you have simply to persevere till the present brief and imperfect stillings of the mind become longer and deeper.

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The concentration in the heart is what brings about the opening of the psychic which is your principal need. If the concentration has brought about a feeling which makes you judge clearly all the other movements and see their nature, then the psychic is already in action. For this is the psychic feeling which brings with it a clear insight into the nature of all movements that come and makes it easy to reject what has to be rejected and keep the right attitude and perception. It does not matter about the image of the Mother. It is her presence whether in form or not that has to be felt always and this the psychic opening will surely bring.

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It [*concentration in the heart*] is the best to “start with” — but as you have already started with success on the two higher centres, there is no reason why you should discontinue that. The

other you may try from time to time when you find a sufficient quietude. Concentration there leads — or should lead — to the psychic opening.

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Concentration in the heart is best aided if possible by the power and light descending from above the head.

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At the top of the head or above it is the right place for Yogic concentration in reading or thinking.

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Brain concentration is always a tapasya and necessarily brings a strain. It is only if one is lifted out of the brain mind altogether that the strain of mental concentration disappears.

Postures for Concentration or Meditation

The sitting motionless posture is the natural posture for concentrated meditation — walking and standing are active conditions suited for the dispense of energy and the activity of the mind. It is only when one has gained the enduring rest and passivity of the consciousness that it is easy to concentrate and receive when walking or doing anything. A fundamental passive condition of the consciousness gathered into itself is the proper poise for concentration and a seated gathered immobility in the body is the best for that. It can be done also lying down, but that position is too passive, tending to be inert rather than gathered. This is the reason why Yogis always sit in an asana. One can accustom oneself to meditate walking, standing, lying, but sitting is the first natural position.

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One can meditate very well when walking.

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It is as each finds convenient. Some meditate better walking, some sitting.

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The rigidity [*of the body during meditation*] comes very often when there is the descent of the higher consciousness into the body.

Regularity, Length and Other Conditions

If it is possible to keep a fixed period for meditation and stick to it, it would certainly be desirable.

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To keep the consciousness awake you must set apart a certain time every day for concentration and remembering the Mother and keeping yourself in contact with us. What is gained is not lost by interruption, but it goes behind and may take time to come out again — so the thread should not be cut.

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It is not the length of the meditations that makes the difference [*in making one vitally and physically strong*]. It is a concentration of the will that is needed.

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It is better to make the deeper concentration when you are alone or quiet. Outward sounds ought not to disturb you.

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In external things all men of action have to do that [*shift their concentration quickly from one thing to another*] — otherwise they would not be able to cope with their work. In respect to inner concentration, it is not so easy because people bring other vibrations which interfere with the poise of the consciousness — a mere mental interruption ought not to be difficult to recover from; but if the consciousness itself gets invaded or else drawn

out, it takes time to get back. In the end a condition develops in which the inner consciousness is always concentrated and in a poise, *samāhitah*, and outside things take place only on the outermost surface. Then it becomes easy.

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It is quite natural that at first there should be the condition of calm and peace only when you sit for concentration. What is important is that there should be this condition whenever you sit and the pressure for it always there. But at other times the result is at first only a certain mental quiet and freedom from thoughts. Afterwards when the condition of peace is quite settled in the inner being—for it is the inner into which you enter whenever you concentrate—then it begins to come out and control the outer, so that the calm and peace remain even when working, mixing with others, talking or other occupations. For then whatever the outer consciousness is doing, one feels the inner being calm within—indeed one feels the inner being as one's real self while the outer is something superficial through which the inner acts on life.

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The gaze should not be fixed for a long time as it overstrains the eyes (unless one has a long practice in Tratak). The fixing of the eyes is not necessary—a natural gaze is sufficient and it should be varied by meditation with closed eyes.

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When the meditation is done with the photo, it is better done with open eyes.

Coming out of Concentration or Meditation

You enter into a condition of deep inwardness and quiet. But if one comes too suddenly out of it into the ordinary consciousness, then there may be a slight nervous shock or a beating of the heart such as you describe, for a short time. It is always best to remain

quiet for a few moments before opening the eyes and coming out of this inwardness.

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It is certainly much better to remain silent and collected for a time after the meditation. It is a mistake to take the meditation lightly—by doing that one fails to receive or spills what is received or most of it.

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Your meditation is all right, as Mother saw—but when you came out of it, you fell into the ordinary consciousness, that is the difficulty. You must try to keep the true consciousness always, even in activity—then the sadhana will begin to be there all the time and your difficulty will disappear.

The Difficulty of the Mechanical Mind

That [*the constant recurrence of trivial thoughts*] is the nature of the mechanical mind—it is not due to any sensitiveness in it. Only as the other parts of the mind are more silent and under control, this activity looks more prominent and takes more space. It usually wears itself out, if one goes on rejecting it.

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It was rather that the active mind became more quiet so that the movements of the mechanical mind became more evident—that is what often happens. What has to be done in that case is to detach oneself from these movements and concentrate without farther attention to them. They are then likely to sink into quietude or fall away.

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To be able to detach oneself from the action of the mechanical mind is the first necessity so that it may be like a noise in the street which passes and which one can ignore. It is easier then

for the quiet and peace of the mind to remain undisturbed by this action even if it occurs.

If the peace and silence continue to come down, they usually become so intense as to seize the physical mind also after a time.

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You are probably paying too much attention to them [*mechanical thoughts*]. It is quite possible to concentrate and let the mechanical activity pass unnoticed.

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The more the psychic spreads in the outer being, the more all these things [*the mechanical activities of the subconscious mind*] fall quiet. That is the best way. Direct efforts to still the mind are a difficult method.

Surface Thoughts and Imaginations

That [*a state in which the outer being responds to surface thoughts while the inner being is "engrossed in meditation"*] is not called meditation — it is a divided state of consciousness. Unless the consciousness is really engrossed and the surface thoughts are only things that come across and touch and pass, it can hardly be called meditation (dhyana). I don't see how the inner being can be "engrossed" while thoughts and imaginations of another kind are rampaging about in the consciousness. One can remain separate and see the thoughts and imaginations pass without being affected, but that is not being plunged or engrossed in meditation.

Straining and Concentration

Straining and concentration are not the same thing. Straining implies an over-eagerness and violence of effort, while concentration is in its nature quiet and steady. If there is restlessness or over-eagerness, then that is not concentration.

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Effort means straining endeavour. There can be an action with a will in it in which there is no strain of effort.

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It was by your personal efforts without guidance that you got into difficulties and into a heated condition in which you could not meditate etc. I asked you to drop the effort and remain quiet and you did so. My intention was that by your remaining quiet, it would be possible for the Mother's Force to work in you and establish a better starting-point and a course of initial experiences. It was what was beginning to come; but if your mind again becomes active and tries to arrange the sadhana for itself, then disturbances are likely to come. The Divine Guidance works best when the psychic is open and in front (yours was beginning to open), but it can also work even when the sadhak is either not conscious of it or else knows it only by its results. As for Nirvikalpa Samadhi, even if one wants it, it is only the result of a long sadhana in a consciousness prepared for it — it is no use thinking of it when the inner consciousness is only just beginning to open to Yogic experience.

Relaxation and Concentration

There are two different states, that which the consciousness takes in concentration and that which it takes in relaxation — the latter is the ordinary consciousness (ordinary for the sadhak, though not perhaps the ordinary consciousness of the average man), the former is what he is attaining to by tapas of concentration in sadhana. To go into the Akshara and witness experiences from there is easy for the sadhak who has got so far. He can also concentrate and maintain the unification of the main aspects of his being, although with more difficulty — but a relaxation there brings him back to the relaxed “ordinary” consciousness. It is only when what is gained by sadhana becomes normal to the ordinary consciousness that this can be avoided. In proportion as this is done, it becomes possible not only to experience the truth subjectively, but make it manifest in action.

Passive Meditation and Concentration

What happened in the beginning of his sadhana must have been that he made the mistake of entering into a passive meditation instead of into a concentration proper. This kind of passive meditation can bring a great peace and quiet and joy. The Light also may come and other spiritual experiences. But it leaves the vital and body passive and without defence against inertia, illness etc. instead of bringing it either a dynamic force or a strong self-contained peace. The consciousness instead of being concentrated gets widely diffused and loosely extended. From the passivity came the weakness and disinclination for the worldly duties; from the diffusion the play of activity in the mind which prevented sleep and could not be controlled in a tendency also for the subtle being to go out of the body in the waking condition instead of through sleep as it ordinarily does, whence the beating of the heart and the cold feet. Concentration must in the earlier stages be active and dynamic with the consciousness gathered and capable of turning the will in any direction.

The concentration in this Yoga must be in the head or in the heart-centre, not in the centre at the base of the spinal cord — that can only come afterwards when all the other centres have been opened.

It is sometimes a little difficult to correct the effects of a wrong start. At any rate he may try the effects of an active concentration in either the head (forehead centre) or heart. The latter may be safer so as to avoid the return of the heating of the head which came from that first concentration. If there are any disturbing results, the concentration should not be continued and all should be turned towards a purification of the being such as he speaks of having practised and only when this is sufficiently advanced, should the concentration be resumed.

Inertia, Laziness, Tiredness in Meditation

It is not a fact that when there is obscurity or inertia, one cannot concentrate or meditate. If one has in the inner being the steady

will to do it, it can be done.

*

It is quite natural to want to meditate while reading Yogic literature — that is not the laziness.

The laziness of the mind consists in not meditating when the consciousness wants to do so.

*

Ego, I suppose, or inertia [*hinders the feeling of satisfied peace or quiet release in meditation*]. If higher meditation or being above keeps you dull and without any kind of satisfaction or peace in sadhana, these are the only two reasons I can think of.

*

If the mind gets tired, naturally it is difficult to concentrate — unless you have become separated from the mind.

*

Naturally one does not get tired if the meditation has become natural. But if the capacity is not there yet, then many cannot go on without a strain which brings fatigue.

*

Concentration is very helpful and necessary — the more one concentrates (of course in the limits of the body's capacity without straining it), the more the force of the Yoga grows. But you must be prepared for the meditation being sometimes not successful and not get upset by it — for that variability of the meditations happens to everybody. There are different causes for it. But it is mostly something physical that interferes, either the need of the body to take time to assimilate what has come or been done or sometimes inertia or dullness due to causes such as those you mention or others. The best thing is to remain quiet and not get nervous or dejected — till the force acts again.

Meditation, Sleep and Samadhi

When one tries to meditate, there is a pressure to go inside, lose the waking consciousness and wake inside, in a deep inner consciousness. But at first the mind takes it for a pressure to go to sleep, since sleep is the only kind of inner consciousness to which it has been accustomed. In Yoga by meditation sleep is therefore often the first difficulty — but if one perseveres then gradually the sleep changes to an inner conscious state.

*

I think the sleepiness is a stage which everybody goes through — a sort of mechanical reaction of the physical to the pressure for including it in the concentration of the sadhana. It is best not to mind it; it will go of itself as the consciousness increases and takes the physical into its poise. It is better to let us know about any physical troubles.

*

The sleep does come like that when one tries to meditate. It has to be dealt with, where that is possible, by turning it into a conscious inner and indrawn state and, where not, by remaining in a quietly concentrated wakefulness open (without effort) to receive.

*

This tendency to sit and be perfectly quiet and this pressure of sleep are not at all due to laziness. You must put that idea out of your head. It is due to the tendency to quiet, peace, going inside; when the sadhana begins with some intensity, it is most often like that for a time. Afterwards there is a more even balance between the inner and the outer consciousness or rather the outer begins to change and become of one piece with the inner. So do not let this trouble you.

*

When the pressure gives a tendency to insideness (samadhi), the

physical being, not being accustomed to go inside except in the way of sleep, translates this into a sense of sleepiness.

*

It [*the tendency to fall asleep during meditation*] is a common obstacle with all who practise Yoga at the beginning. This sleep disappears gradually in two ways — (1) by the intensifying of the force of concentration — (2) by the sleep itself becoming a kind of *svapna samadhi* in which one is conscious of inner experiences that are not dreams (i.e. the waking consciousness is lost for the time, but it is replaced not by sleep but by an inward conscious state in which one moves in the supraphysical of the mental or vital being).

*

The Yogic sleep is good only when it is Yogic enough to contain something, to be an inner consciousness or an experience of other planes. The *jāgarti* is important — to be conscious in the sleep, an inner waking. But when the mind is not accustomed, it tends to respond to the impulse towards this “going inside” into an inner consciousness caused by meditation by simply falling into the usual sleep to which it is accustomed. *Nidrā* is one of the recognised difficulties of Yoga — *nidrā* refusing to turn into *samadhi*, whether *svapna-samādhi* or *suṣupti*. So the force is necessary and I will try to send it. I only wish people would give me more time for this inner work both for myself and them! but that seems past hoping for.

*

It is probably that [*in meditation*] you go inside into a sort of *samadhi* but are not yet conscious there (hence the idea of sleep). X is not asleep, but he has when he goes inside no control of his body. Many Yogis have this difficulty and use a contrivance which is put under the chin to hold up the head and with it the body during this inward-going concentration.

*

There is no harm in the deep sleep that comes — as I have told you, it is the tendency to go deep inside that brings it and it is necessary to go deep inside in order to establish the full connection between the psychic and the rest of the nature.