

Chapter Three

Quiet and Calm

Quiet, Calm, Peace, Silence

The words “peace, calm, quiet, silence” have each their own shade of meaning, but it is not easy to define them.

Peace — *śānti*.

Calm — *sthiratā*.

Quiet — *acañcalatā*.

Silence — *niścāla-nīravatā*.

Quiet is a condition in which there is no restlessness or disturbance.

Calm is a still, unmoved condition which no disturbance can affect — it is a less negative condition than quiet.

Peace is a still more positive condition; it carries with it a sense of settled and harmonious rest and deliverance.

Silence is a state in which either there is no movement of the mind or vital or else a great stillness which no surface movement can pierce or alter.

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Quiet is rather negative — it is the absence of disturbance.

Calm is a positive tranquillity which can exist in spite of superficial disturbances.

Peace is a calm deepened into something that is very positive amounting almost to a tranquil waveless Ananda.

Silence is the absence of all motion of thought or other vibration of activity.

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Quietness is when the mind or vital is not troubled, restless, drawn about by or crowded with thoughts and feelings. Especially when either is detached and looks at these as a surface movement, we say that the mind or vital is quiet.

Calmness is a more positive condition, not merely an absence of restlessness, over-activity or trouble. When there is a clear sense of great or strong tranquillity which nothing troubles or can trouble, then we say that calm is established.

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Calm is a strong and positive quietude, firm and solid—ordinary quietude is mere negation, simply the absence of disturbance.

Peace is a deep quietude where no disturbance can come—a quietude with a sense of established security and release.

In complete silence there are either no thoughts or, if they come, they are felt as something coming from outside and not disturbing the silence.

Silence of the mind, peace or calm in the mind are three things that are very close together and bring each other.

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These [*tranquillity and stillness*] are general words, of a general and not a special Yogic significance. Quiet, calm and peace can all be described as tranquillity, silence is akin to what is meant by stillness.

Quietude

Quiet means to keep the inner quietude and keep turned to the Mother with the aspiration towards or call for the return of the right condition.

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Remember first that an inner quietude, caused by the purification of the restless mind and vital, is the first condition of a secure sadhana. Remember, next, that to feel the Mother's presence while in external action is already a great step and one that cannot be attained without a considerable inner progress. Probably, what you feel you need so much but cannot define is a constant and vivid sense of the Mother's force working in you, descending

from above and taking possession of the different planes of your being. That is often a prior condition for the twofold movement of ascent and descent; it will surely come in time. These things can take a long time to begin visibly, especially when the mind is accustomed to be very active and has not the habit of mental silence. When that veiling activity is there, much work has to be carried on behind the mobile screen of the mind and the sadhak thinks nothing is happening when really much preparation is being done. If you want a more swift and visible progress, it can only be by bringing your psychic to the front through a constant self-offering. Aspire intensely, but without impatience.

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Your mind is too full of demands and desires. If you want to be able to practise the Yoga here, you must throw them from you and learn quietude, desirelessness, simplicity and surrender. It is these you must get first; other things can come afterwards — for this is the only true foundation of the sadhana.

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Always get back to quietude. It is through the quietude that the right attitude and understanding and movements come back. It is natural for the lower vital to be made up of feelings, impulses and desires and to be attached to outer things — but that is only a part of you. There is also the psychic and the higher mind and higher vital which only need quietude and the help of the Force and Peace behind them to come forward more strongly and dominate over the lower vital and help to change it.

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You are too easily invaded by these things [*from outside*]. You must call for a calm quietness in the vital and physical and a Force in you and around you which will repel all foreign forces the moment they appear. If there is entire quietude and strength in the nerves, these outside forces will not easily be able to touch you.

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You should realise that while quiet surroundings are desirable, the true quiet is within and no other will give you the condition you want.

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The inner spiritual progress does not depend on outer conditions so much as on the way we react to them from within — that has always been the ultimate verdict of spiritual experience. It is why we insist on taking the right attitude and persisting in it, on an inner state not dependent on outer circumstances, a state of equality and calm, if it cannot be at once of inner happiness, on going more and more within and looking from within outwards instead of living in the surface mind which is always at the mercy of the shocks and blows of life. It is only from that inner state that one can be stronger than life and its disturbing forces and hope to conquer.

To remain quiet within, firm in the will to go through, refusing to be disturbed or discouraged by difficulties or fluctuations, that is one of the first things to be learned on the Path. To do otherwise is to encourage the instability of consciousness, the difficulty of keeping experience of which you complain. It is only if you keep quiet and steady within that the lines of experience can go on with some steadiness — though they are never without periods of interruption and fluctuation; but these, if properly treated, can then become periods of assimilation and exhaustion of difficulty rather than denials of sadhana.

A spiritual atmosphere is more important than outer conditions; if one can get that and also create one's own spiritual air to breathe in and live in it, that is the true condition of progress.

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If you can achieve quietude followed by an upward openness, it is better than the effort which sways between strong experiences and strong adverse reactions.

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Even to have the quietude and calm somewhere behind or in

a passive way is more important and helpful than it seems. It provides a sort of permanent ground on which ultimately a lasting peace, power and joy can be built. If one can feel one part of the being always quiet in spite of the disturbances in another part, then one has made the first firm step towards a permanent change.

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This state of emptiness and quietude and absence of reactions is regarded by Yogins as a great step in advance, especially the equality and indifference to what is said or done. For the moment it is a neutral condition only, but that it is usually at first. Afterwards it changes into peace or even into an equal Ananda undisturbed by anything that can happen.

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The quiet and calm have to be increased so as to be a firm basis for the love and Ananda.

Quiet Mind

A quiet mind is a mind that does not get disturbed, is not restless and always vibrating with the need of mental action.

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It is not possible to make a foundation in Yoga if the mind is restless. The first thing needed is quiet in the mind. Also, to merge the personal consciousness is not the first aim of the Yoga; the first aim is to open it to a higher spiritual consciousness and for this also a quiet mind is the first need.

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The first step is a quiet mind—silence is a farther step, but quietude must be there, and by a quiet mind I mean a mental consciousness within which sees thoughts arrive to it and move about, but does not itself feel that it is thinking or identify itself with the thoughts or call them its own. Thoughts, mental

movements may pass through it as wayfarers appear and pass from elsewhere through a silent country — the quiet mind observes them or does not care to observe them but in either case does not become active or lose its quietude. Silence is more than quietude; it can be gained by banishing thought altogether from the inner mind keeping it voiceless or quite outside; but more easily it is established by a descent from above — one feels it coming down, entering and occupying, or surrounding the personal consciousness which then tends to merge itself in the vast impersonal silence.

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To get rid of the random thoughts of the surface physical mind is not easy. It is sometimes done by a sudden miracle as in my own case, but that is rare. Some get it done by a slow process of concentration, but that may take a very long time. It is easier to have a quiet mind with things that come in passing on the surface, as people pass in the street, and one is free to attend to them or not — that is to say, there develops a sort of double mind, one inner silent and concentrated when it pleases to be so, a quiet witness when it chooses to see thoughts and things, — the other meant for surface dynamism. It is probable in your case that this will come as soon as these descents of peace, intensity or Ananda get strong enough to occupy the whole system.

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How can you throw away the mind unless you want to disappear from manifested existence? It has first to be made quiet and open to the higher consciousness and transformed by the descent of the higher consciousness.

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First aspire and pray to the Mother for quiet in the mind, purity, calm and peace, an awakened consciousness, intensity of devotion, strength and spiritual capacity to face all inner and outer difficulties and go through to the end of the Yoga. If the consciousness awakens and there is devotion and intensity of

aspiration, it will be possible for the mind, provided it learns quietude and peace, to grow in knowledge.

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It is in the quiet mind that the true observation and knowledge come.

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You have to become conscious [*in writing poetry*] as in Yoga. The mind has to be silent and you have to become aware of the inspiration as it comes and its source and of the mixture that comes on the way. The more the mind becomes quiet, the more all this is possible.

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All quietude of the mind makes good conditions for the receptivity to act.

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As I have said already, in all matters, work and study as well as in the inner progress in the Yoga, the same thing is needed if you want perfection—quietude of mind, becoming aware of the Force, opening to it, allowing it to work in you. To aim at perfection is all right, but restlessness of mind is not the way towards it. To dwell upon your imperfections and be always thinking how to do and what to do, is not the way either. Remain quiet, open yourself, allow the consciousness to grow—call the Force to work. As it grows and as the Force works, you will become aware not only of what is imperfect, but of the movement which will take you (not at one step, but progressively) out of the imperfection and you will then only have to follow that movement.

If you overstrain yourself by too prolonged work or a restless working, that disturbs or weakens the nervous system, the vital-physical, and lays one open to the action of the wrong forces. To work but quietly so as to have a steady progress is the right way.

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1. A quiet mind makes consciousness easier.

2. If you keep a quiet mind and a constant contact with myself and the Mother and the true Light and Force, then things will become easy and straight — it is the *only* way to get to the realisation.

3. It is a mistake to think that this method will not lead you to the supramental realisation. It is the only way to advance towards the supramental change.

4. It is because you become doubtful and begin to follow after other ways and other (lower) experiences that you get again confused and full of incertitudes.

5. Keep to *one* way, the way shown to you by me. It is by following this way that you can reach the wideness you want — if you run about on many ways, that will bring not wideness but confusion.

6. Here in the lower nature there are many things, but they are in a state of disharmony, so to follow them all together means disharmony, confusion, want of organisation, fight. In the higher (supramental) nature there is a greater wideness and much more is there than in the lower nature; but all is harmony, organisation, peace. Follow therefore the one way that leads to the higher supramental nature.

7. Do not be impatient, because full knowledge does not come to you at once. In quietude of mind keep the contact, let the true Light and Force work and with time all knowledge will come and the Truth will grow in you.

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Do you imagine that a quiet mind cannot reject anything and it is only the unquiet mind that can do it? It is the quiet mind that can best do it. Quiet does not mean inert and tamasic.

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That is absurd. Doing nothing with the mind is not quiet or silence. It is inactivity that keeps the mind thinking mechanically and discursively instead of concentrating on an object — that is all.

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Keeping the mind without occupation is not the same thing as peace or silence.

Vacant Mind

Keep the quietude and do not mind if it is for a time an empty quietude; the consciousness is often like a vessel which has to be emptied of its mixed or undesirable contents; it has to be kept vacant for a while till it can be filled with things new and true, right and pure. The one thing to be avoided is the refilling of the cup with the old turbid contents. Meanwhile wait, open yourself upwards, call very quietly and steadily, not with a too restless eagerness, for the peace to come into the silence and, once the peace is there, for the joy and the presence.

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The difference between a vacant mind and a calm mind is this, that when the mind is vacant, there is no thought, no conception, no mental action of any kind, except an essential perception of things without the formed idea; but in the calm mind, it is the substance of the mental being that is still, so still that nothing disturbs it. If thoughts or activities come, they do not rise at all out of the mind, but they come from outside and cross the mind as a flight of birds crosses the sky in a windless air. It passes, disturbs nothing, leaving no trace. Even if a thousand images or the most violent events pass across it, the calm stillness remains as if the very texture of the mind were a substance of eternal and indestructible peace. A mind that has achieved this calmness can begin to act, even incessantly and powerfully, but it will keep its fundamental stillness — originating nothing from itself but receiving from Above and giving it a mental form without adding anything of its own, calmly, dispassionately, though with the joy of the Truth and the happy power and light of its passage.

Calm

It is the first secret of Yoga, to maintain the inner calm always

and from that calm to meet everything.

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It is not necessary [*in a calm mind*] that there should be no thought. When there is no thought, it is silence. But the mind is said to be calm when thoughts, feelings, etc. may pass through it, but it is not disturbed. It feels that the thoughts are not its own; it observes them perhaps; but it is not perturbed by anything.

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What you have written about your condition seems to be correct as a whole. There is certainly a greater calm within and a freedom of the inner being which was not there once. It is this which gives you the equality you feel there and the capacity to escape from the more serious disturbances. When one has this basis of inner calm, the difficulties and imperfections of the surface can be dealt with without upsets, depressions, etc. The power to go among others without any invasion is also due to the same cause.

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Do not attach so much importance to mistakes or insist on your non-receptiveness and unconsciousness. You have only to turn always to the Force that gives you calmness and in the calmness you will become progressively more and more conscious and receptive.

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Calm, even if it seems at first only a negative thing, is so difficult to attain that to have it at all must be regarded as a great step in advance.

In reality, calm is not a negative thing; it is the very nature of the Sat-Purusha and the positive foundation of the divine consciousness. Whatever else is aspired for and gained, this must be kept. Even Knowledge, Power, Ananda, if they come and do not find this foundation, are unable to remain and have to withdraw until the divine purity and peace of the Sat-Purusha are permanently there.

Aspire for the rest of the divine consciousness, but with a calm and deep aspiration. It can be ardent as well as calm, but not impatient, restless or full of rajasic eagerness.

Only in the quiet mind and being can the supramental Truth build its true creation.

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The calm from above came to you and established your connection with the Above, — and if you hold firmly to it, you will be able to remain calm. But to be rid of these vital disturbances from outside, you have to get down the Power and Will that is also there above — or at least so to be connected with it that it will act whenever you call upon it against the forces of the Ignorance.

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It is the calm that has come down from above, only you are feeling it from there (mind and heart) and not from above the mind. But you have to find it below the heart and not only from the heart above, — the calm has to spread lower down.

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The first [*calmness with disturbances on the surface*] is the ordinary fundamental calm of the individual Adhar — the second [*perfect stillness in the body and in the surrounding atmosphere*] is the fundamental limitless calm of the cosmic consciousness, a calm which abides whether separated from all movements or supporting them.

This [*limitless stillness*] is the calm of the Atman, the Self above, silent, immutable and infinite.