Chapter Eleven

Patience and Perseverance

Patience

It is certain that an ardent aspiration for the Divine helps to progress, but patience is also needed. For it is a very big change that has to be made and, although there can be moments of great rapidity, it is never all the time like that. Old things try to stick as much as possible; the new that come have to develop and the consciousness takes time to assimilate them and make them normal to the nature.

Keep this firm faith in your mind that the thing needed is being done and will be done fully. There can be no doubt about that.

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There are always difficulties and a hampered progress in the early stages and a delay in the opening of the inner doors until the being is ready. If you feel whenever you meditate the quiescence and the flashes of the inner Light and if the inward urge is growing so strong that the external hold is decreasing and the vital disturbances are losing their force, that is already a great progress. The road of Yoga is long, every inch of ground has to be won against much resistance and no quality is more needed by the sadhak than patience and single-minded perseverance with a faith that remains firm through all difficulties, delays and apparent failures.

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Determination is needed and a firm patience, not to be discouraged by this or that failure. It is a change in the habit of the physical nature and that needs a long patient work of detail.

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One who has not the courage to face patiently and firmly life and its difficulties will never be able to go through the still greater inner difficulties of the sadhana. The very first lesson in this Yoga is to face life and its trials with a quiet mind, a firm courage and an entire reliance on the Divine Shakti.

* It is true that a great patience and steadfastness is needed. Be then firm and patient and fixed on the aims of the sadhana, but not over-eager to have them at once. A work has to be done in you and is being done; help it to be done by keeping an attitude of firm faith and confidence. Doubts rise in all, they are natural to the human physical mind — reject them. Impatience and over-eagerness for the result at once are natural to the human vital; it is by firm confidence in the Mother that they will disappear. The love, the belief in her as the Divine to whom your life is given, — oppose with that every contrary feeling and then those contrary feelings will after a time no longer be able to come to you.

* It is an impatience and restlessness in the vital which makes it feel as if it were no use staying here because things are not moving forward. Sadhana is a thing which takes time and needs patience. There are often periods of quiescence in which a working is going on behind of which the mind is not aware — all seems then to be inert and dull; but if one has patience and confidence, the consciousness passes through these periods to new openings and things which seemed to be impossible to effect at that time, get done. The impulse to rush away is always a mistake — perseverance in the path is the one rule to cling to and with that finally all obstacles are overcome.

* Impatience is always a mistake, it does not help but hinders. A quiet happy faith and confidence is the best foundation for sadhana; for the rest a constant opening wide of oneself to receive with an aspiration which may be intense, but must always be
calm and steady. Full Yogic realisation does not come all at once, it comes after a long preparation of the Adhara which may take a long time.

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In a more deep and spiritual sense a concrete realisation is that which makes the thing realised more real, dynamic, intimately present to the consciousness than any physical thing can be. Such a realisation of the personal Divine or of the impersonal Brahman or of the Self does not usually come at the beginning of a sadhana or in the first years or for many years. It comes so to a very few; mine came fifteen years after my first pre-Yogic experience in London and in the fifth year after I started Yoga. That I consider extraordinarily quick, an express train speed almost — though there may no doubt have been several quicker achievements. But to expect and demand it so soon and get fed up because it does not come and declare Yoga impossible except for two or three in the ages would betoken in the eyes of any experienced Yogi or sadhaka a rather rash and abnormal impatience. Most would say that a slow development is the best one can hope for in the first years and only when the nature is ready and fully concentrated towards the Divine can the definitive experience come. To some rapid preparatory experiences can come at a comparatively early stage, but even they cannot escape the labour of the consciousness which will make these experiences culminate in the realisation that is enduring and complete. It is not a question of my liking or disliking your demand or attitude. It is a matter of fact and truth and experience, not of liking or disliking, two things which do not usually sway me. It is the fact that people who are grateful and cheerful and ready to go step by step, even by slow steps, if need be, do actually march faster and more surely than those who are impatient and in haste and at each step despair or murmur. It is what I have always seen — there may be instances to the contrary and I have no objection to your being one, — none at all. I only say that if you could maintain “hope and fervour and faith”, there would be a much bigger chance — that is all.
This is just a personal explanation — a long explanation but which seemed to be called for by your enhancement of my glory — and is dictated by a hope that after all in the long run an accumulation of explanations may persuade you to prefer the sunny path to the grey one. My faith again perhaps? But, sunny path or grey one, the one thing wanted is that you should push through and arrive.

* You say after several years you have not changed your nature. I only wish the external nature were so easy to transform that it could be done in a few years. You forget also that the real problem — to get rid of the pervading ego in this nature — is a task you have seriously tackled only a short time ago. And it is not in a few months that that can be done. Even the best sadhaks find after many experiences and large changes on the higher planes that here much remains to be done. How do you expect to get rid of it at once unlike everybody else? A Yoga like this needs patience, because it means a change both of the radical motives and of each part and detail of the nature. It will not do to say — “Yesterday I determined this time to give myself entirely to the Mother, and look it is not done, on the contrary all the old opposite things turn up once more; so there is nothing to do but to proclaim myself unfit and give up the Yoga.” Of course when you come to the point where you make a resolution of that kind, immediately all that stands in the way does rise up — it invariably happens. The thing to be done is to stand back, observe and reject, not to allow these things to get hold of you, to keep your central will separate from them and call in the Mother’s Force to meet them. If one does get involved as often happens, then to get disinvolved as soon as possible and go forward again. That is what everybody, every Yogan does — to be depressed because one cannot do everything in a rush is quite contrary to the truth of the matter. A stumble does not mean that one is unfit, nor does prolonged difficulty mean that for oneself the thing is impossible.

The fact that you have to give up your ordinary work when
you get depressed does not mean that you have not gained in steadiness — it only means that the steadiness you have gained is not a personal virtue but depends on your keeping the contact with the Mother — for it is her Force that is behind it and behind all the progress you can make. Learn to rely on that Force more, to open to it more completely and to seek spiritual progress even not for your own sake but for the sake of the Divine — then you will go on more smoothly. Get the full psychic opening in the most external physical consciousness. That and not despondency is the lesson you ought to draw from your present adverse experience.

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They [patience and peace] go together. By having patience under all kinds of pressure you lay the foundations of peace.

**Persistence**

Your attitude towards the change needed and new life is the right one. A quiet, vigilant but undistressed persistence is the best way to get it done.

For the intimacy within to be reestablished the quietude must deepen so that the psychic may come out in the physical as it had done in the higher parts.

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Things that have long acted on the nature take some time to go altogether, but they are bound to go since you have the sincere desire and your psychic being is growing in your nature. Our help is there always with you. You have to persist in faith and quietude and let the psychic grow more and more, then all will come right and you will no longer have this trouble.

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It is so with all things in the path of sadhana — one must persist however long it takes, so only one can achieve.

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What I want of you besides aspiring for faith? Well, just a little thoroughness and persistence in the method! Don’t aspire for two days and then sink into the dumps, evolving a gospel of earthquake and Schopenhauer plus the jackal and all the rest of it. Give the Divine a full sporting chance. When he lights something in you or is preparing a light, don’t come in with a wet blanket of despondency and throw it on the poor flame. You will say it is a mere candle that is lit — nothing at all? But in these matters, when the darkness of human mind and life and body has to be dissipated, a candle is always a beginning — a lamp can follow and afterwards a sun — but the beginning must be allowed to have a sequel — not get cut off from its natural *sequelae* by chinks of sadness and doubt and despair. At the beginning and for a long time the experiences do usually come in little quanta with empty spaces between — but, if allowed their way, the spaces will diminish and the quantum theory give way to the Newtonian continuity of the spirit. But you have never yet given it a real chance. The empty spaces have become peopled with doubts and denials and so the quanta have become rare, the beginnings remain beginnings. Other difficulties you have faced and rejected, but this difficulty you dallied too much for a long time and it has become strong — it must be dealt with by a persevering effort. I do not say that all doubts must disappear before anything comes — that would be to make sadhana impossible, for doubt is the mind’s persistent assailant. All I say is, don’t allow the assailant to become a companion, don’t give him the open door and the fireside seat. Above all don’t drive away the incoming Divine with that dispiriting wet blanket of sadness and despair!

To put it more soberly, — accept once for all that this thing has to be done, that it is the only thing left for yourself or the earth. Outside are earthquakes and Hitlers and a collapsing civilisation and — generally speaking — the jackal in the flood? All the more reason to tend towards the one thing to be done, the thing you have been sent to aid in getting done. It is difficult and the way long and the encouragement given meagre? What then? Why should you expect so great a thing to be easy or that
there must be either a swift success or none? The difficulties have
to be faced and the more cheerfully they are faced, the sooner
they will be overcome. The one thing to do is to keep the mantra
of success, the determination of victory, the fixed resolve, “Have
it I must and have it I will.” Impossible? There is no such thing
as an impossibility — there are difficulties and things of longue
haleine, but no impossibles. What one is determined fixedly to
do, will get done now or later — it becomes possible.

There — that is my counterblast to your variations on
Schopenhauer. I conclude — drive out dark despair and go
bravely on with your poetry, your novels — and your Yoga. As
the darkness disappears, the inner doors too will open.

Perseverance

Whatever method is used, persistence and perseverance are es-
sential. For whatever method is used, the complexity of the
natural resistance will be there to combat it.

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One who fears monotony and wants something new would not
be able to do Yoga or at least this Yoga which needs an inex-
haustible perseverance and patience. The fear of death shows
a vital weakness which is also contrary to a capacity for Yoga.
Equally, one who is under the domination of his passions, would
find the Yoga difficult and, unless supported by a true inner call
and a sincere and strong aspiration for the spiritual conscious-
ness and union with the Divine, might very easily fall fatally and
his effort come to nothing.

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There can be no doubt about the Divine Grace. It is perfectly
true also that if a man is sincere, he will reach the Divine. But
it does not follow that he will reach immediately, easily and
without delay. Your error is there, to fix for God a term, five
years, six years, and doubt because the effect is not yet there. A
man may be centrally sincere and yet there may be many things
that have to be changed in him before realisation can begin. His sincerity must enable him to persevere always — for it is a longing for the Divine that nothing can quench, neither delay nor disappointment nor difficulty nor anything else.

You have got troubled again because you have allowed your mind to become active again in its ignorance, questioning, trying to refute the simplest and most established spiritual truths, trying to decide without waiting for the inner knowledge. Throw all that away and go on in quietude, not minding if it takes short or long for things to open up. That was what you had undertaken to do. Keep to it and, however slowly, the consciousness will open and light come.

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Keep quietude, persevere. These are the clouds that cover the growing Light; but the true consciousness is there increasing behind the clouds.

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There is no such impossibility of your victory over the harder parts of your nature as you imagine. There is only needed the perseverance to go on till this resistance breaks down and the psychic which is not absent nor unmanifest is able to dominate the others. That has to be done whether you stay here or not and to go is likely only to increase the difficulty and imperil the final result — it cannot help you. It is here that the struggle however acute has, because of the immediate presence of the Mother, the best chance and certitude of a solution and successful ending.

**Endurance**

*Endurance:* The power to go through effort, difficulty or trouble without getting fatigued, depressed, discouraged or impatient and without breaking off the effort or giving up one’s aim or resolution.
Resolution

A resolution means the will to try to get a thing done by the given time. It is not a binding “promise” that the thing will be done by that time. Even if it is not, the endeavour will have to continue, just as if no date had been fixed.

Firmness

Whether by tapasya or surrender does not matter, the one thing is to be firm in setting one’s face to the goal. Once one has set one’s feet on the way, how can one draw back from it to something inferior? If one keeps firm, falls do not matter, one rises up again and goes forward. If one is firm towards the goal, there can be on the way to the Divine no eventual failure. And if there is something within you that drives, as surely there is, falterings or falls or failures of faith make no eventual difference. One has to go on till the struggle is over and there is the straight and open and thornless way before us.

* One cannot say whether the conquest is near or not — one has to go on steadily with the process of the sadhana without thinking of near and far, fixed on the aim, not elated if it seems to come close, not depressed if it still seems to be far.

* You have only to remain quiet and firm in your following of the path and your will to go to the end. If you do that, circumstances will in the end be obliged to shape themselves to your will, because it will be the Divine Will in you.