Chapter X

The Elements of Perfection

WHEN the self is purified of the wrong and confused action of the instrumental Nature and liberated into its self-existent being, consciousness, power and bliss and the Nature itself liberated from the tangle of this lower action of the struggling gunas and the dualities into the high truth of the divine calm and the divine action, then spiritual perfection becomes possible. Purification and freedom are the indispensible antecedents of perfection. A spiritual self-perfection can only mean a growing into oneness with the nature of divine being, and therefore according to our conception of divine being will be the aim, effort and method of our seeking after this perfection. To the Mayavadin the highest or rather the only real truth of being is the impassive, impersonal, self-aware Absolute and therefore to grow into an impassive calm, impersonality and pure self-awareness of spirit is his idea of perfection and a rejection of cosmic and individual being and a settling into silent self-knowledge is his way. To the Buddhist for whom the highest truth is a negation of being, a recognition of the impermanence and sorrow of being and the disastrous nullity of desire and a dissolution of egoism, of the upholding associations of the Idea and the successions of Karma are the perfect way. Other ideas of the Highest are less negative; each according to its own idea leads towards some likeness to the Divine, sādṛśya, and each finds its own way, such as the love and worship of the Bhakta and the growing into the likeness of the Divine by love. But for the integral Yoga perfection will mean a divine spirit and a divine nature which will admit of a divine relation and action in the world; it will mean also in its entirety a divinising of the whole nature, a rejection of all its wrong knots of being and action, but no rejection of any part of our being or of any field of our action. The approach to perfection must be therefore a
large and complex movement and its results and workings will have an infinite and varied scope. We must fix in order to find a clue and method on certain essential and fundamental elements and requisites of perfection, *siddhi*; for if these are secured, all the rest will be found to be only their natural development or particular working. We may cast these elements into six divisions, interdependent on each other to a great extent but still in a certain way naturally successive in their order of attainment. The movement will start from a basic equality of the soul and mount to an ideal action of the Divine through our perfected being in the largeness of the Brahmic unity.

The first necessity is some fundamental poise of the soul both in its essential and its natural being regarding and meeting the things, impacts and workings of Nature. This poise we shall arrive at by growing into a perfect equality, *samata*. The self, spirit or Brahman is one in all and therefore one to all; it is, as is said in the Gita which has developed fully this idea of equality and indicated its experience on at least one side of equality, the equal Brahman, *samam brahma*; the Gita even goes so far in one passage as to identify equality and yoga, *samatvam yoga ucyate*. That is to say, equality is the sign of unity with the Brahman, of becoming Brahman, of growing into an undisturbed spiritual poise of being in the Infinite. Its importance can hardly be exaggerated; for it is the sign of our having passed beyond the egoistic determinations of our nature, of our having conquered our enslaved response to the dualities, of our having transcended the shifting turmoil of the gunas, of our having entered into the calm and peace of liberation. Equality is a term of consciousness which brings into the whole of our being and nature the eternal tranquillity of the Infinite. Moreover, it is the condition of a securely and perfectly divine action; the security and largeness of the cosmic action of the Infinite is based upon and never breaks down or forfeits its eternal tranquillity. That too must be the character of the perfect spiritual action; to be equal and one to all things in spirit, understanding, mind, heart and natural consciousness, — even in the most physical consciousness, — and to make all their workings, whatever their outward adaptation to
the thing to be done, always and imminuabily full of the divine equality and calm must be its inmost principle. That may be said to be the passive or basic, the fundamental and receptive side of equality, but there is also an active and possessive side, an equal bliss which can only come when the peace of equality is founded and which is the beatific flower of its fullness.

The next necessity of perfection is to raise all the active parts of the human nature to that highest condition and working pitch of their power and capacity, ṣakti, at which they become capable of being divinised into true instruments of the free, perfect, spiritual and divine action. For practical purposes we may take the understanding, the heart, the prana and the body as the four members of our nature which have thus to be prepared, and we have to find the constituent terms of their perfection. Also there is the dynamical force in us (vīrya) of the temperament, character and soul nature, svabhāva, which makes the power of our members effective in action and gives them their type and direction; this has to be freed from its limitations, enlarged, rounded so that the whole manhood in us may become the basis of a divine manhood, when the Purusha, the real Man in us, the divine Soul, shall act fully in this human instrument and shine fully through this human vessel. To divinise the perfected nature we have to call in the divine Power or Shakti to replace our limited human energy so that this may be shaped into the image of and filled with the force of a greater infinite energy, daivī prakṛti, bhāgavatī ṣakti. This perfection will grow in the measure in which we can surrender ourselves, first, to the guidance and then to the direct action of that Power and of the Master of our being and our works to whom it belongs, and for this purpose faith is the essential, faith is the great motor-power of our being in our aspirations to perfection,—here, a faith in God and the Shakti which shall begin in the heart and understanding, but shall take possession of all our nature, all its consciousness, all its dynamic motive-force. These four things are the essentials of this second element of perfection, the full powers of the members of the instrumental nature, the perfected dynamis of the soul nature, the assumption of them into the action of the divine
Power, and a perfect faith in all our members to call and support that assumption, śakti, vīrya, daiśī prakṛti, śraddhā.

But so long as this development takes place only on the highest level of our normal nature, we may have a reflected and limited image of perfection translated into the lower terms of the soul in mind, life and body, but not the possession of the divine perfection in the highest terms possible to us of the divine Idea and its Power. That is to be found beyond these lower principles in the supramental gnosis; therefore the next step of perfection will be the evolution of the mental into the gnostic being. This evolution is effected by a breaking beyond the mental limitation, a stride upward into the next higher plane or region of our being hidden from us at present by the shining lid of the mental reflections and a conversion of all that we are into the terms of this greater consciousness. In the gnosis itself, viññāna, there are several gradations which open at their highest into the full and infinite Ananda. The gnosis once effectively called into action will progressively take up all the terms of intelligence, will, sense-mind, heart, the vital and sensational being and translate them by a luminous and harmonising conversion into a unity of the truth, power and delight of a divine existence. It will lift into that light and force and convert into their own highest sense our whole intellectual, volitional, dynamic, ethical, aesthetic, sensational, vital and physical being. It has the power also of overcoming physical limitations and developing a more perfect and divinely instrumental body. Its light opens up the fields of the superconscient and darts its rays and pours its luminous flood into the subconscious and enlightens its obscure hints and withheld secrets. It admits us to a greater light of the Infinite than is reflected in the paler luminosity even of the highest mentality. While it perfects the individual soul and nature in the sense of a diviner existence and makes a full harmony of the diversities of our being, it founds all its action upon the Unity from which it proceeds and takes up everything into that Unity. Personality and impersonality, the two eternal aspects of existence, are made one by its action in the spiritual being and Nature body of the Purushottama.
The gnostic perfection, spiritual in its nature, is to be accomplished here in the body and takes life in the physical world as one of its fields, even though the gnosis opens to us possession of planes and worlds beyond the material universe. The physical body is therefore a basis of action, \textit{pratiṣṭhā}, which cannot be despised, neglected or excluded from the spiritual evolution: a perfection of the body as the outer instrument of a complete divine living on earth will be necessarily a part of the gnostic conversion. The change will be effected by bringing in the law of the gnostic Purusha, \textit{vijñānamaya puruṣa}, and of that into which it opens, the Anandamaya, into the physical consciousness and its members. Pushed to its highest conclusion this movement brings in a spiritualising and illumination of the whole physical consciousness and a divinising of the law of the body. For behind the gross physical sheath of this materially visible and sensible frame there is subliminally supporting it and discoverable by a finer subtle consciousness a subtle body of the mental being and a spiritual or causal body of the gnostic and bliss soul in which all the perfection of a spiritual embodiment is to be found, a yet unmanifested divine law of the body. Most of the physical siddhās acquired by certain Yogins are brought about by some opening up of the law of the subtle or a calling down of something of the law of the spiritual body. The ordinary method is the opening up of the \textit{cakras} by the physical processes of Hathayoga (of which something is also included in the Rajayoga) or by the methods of the Tantric discipline. But while these may be optionally used at certain stages by the integral Yoga, they are not indispensable; for here the reliance is on the power of the higher being to change the lower existence, a working is chosen mainly from above downward and not the opposite way, and therefore the development of the superior power of the gnosis will be awaited as the instrumentative change in this part of the Yoga.

There will remain, because it will then only be entirely possible, the perfect action and enjoyment of being on the gnostic basis. The Purusha enters into cosmic manifestation for the variations of his infinite existence, for knowledge, action and
enjoyment; the gnosis brings the fullness of spiritual knowledge and it will found on that the divine action and cast the enjoyment of world and being into the law of the truth, the freedom and the perfection of the spirit. But neither action nor enjoyment will be the lower action of the gunas and consequent egoistic enjoyment mostly of the satisfaction of rajasic desire which is our present way of living. Whatever desire will remain, if that name be given, will be the divine desire, the will to delight of the Purusha enjoying in his freedom and perfection the action of the perfected Prakriti and all her members. The Prakriti will take up the whole nature into the law of her higher divine truth and act in that law offering up the universal enjoyment of her action and being to the Anandamaya Ishwara, the Lord of existence and works and Spirit of bliss, who presides over and governs her workings. The individual soul will be the channel of this action and offering, and it will enjoy at once its oneness with the Ishwara and its oneness with the Prakriti and will enjoy all relations with Infinite and finite, with God and the universe and beings in the universe in the highest terms of the union of the universal Purusha and Prakriti.

All the gnostic evolution opens up into the divine principle of Ananda, which is the foundation of the fullness of spiritual being, consciousness and bliss of Sachchidananda or eternal Brahman. Possessed at first by reflection in the mental experience, it will be possessed afterwards with a greater fullness and directness in the massed and luminous consciousness, cidghana, which comes by the gnosis. The Siddha or perfected soul will live in union with the Purushottama in this Brahmic consciousness, he will be conscious in the Brahman that is the All, sarvān brahma, in the Brahman infinite in being and infinite in quality, anantān brahma, in Brahman as self-existent consciousness and universal knowledge, jñānān brahma, in Brahman as the self-existent bliss and its universal delight of being, ānandān brahma. He will experience all the universe as the manifestation of the One, all quality and action as the play of his universal and infinite energy, all knowledge and conscious experience as the outflowing of that consciousness, and all in the terms of that
one Ananda. His physical being will be one with all material Nature, his vital being with the life of the universe, his mind with the cosmic mind, his spiritual knowledge and will with the divine knowledge and will both in itself and as it pours itself through these channels, his spirit with the one spirit in all beings. All the variety of cosmic existence will be changed to him in that unity and revealed in the secret of its spiritual significance. For in this spiritual bliss and being he will be one with That which is the origin and continent and inhabitant and spirit and constituting power of all existence. This will be the highest reach of self-perfection.