Chapter Eight

Bhakti Yoga and Vaishnavism

The Vaishnava Theory and Sadhana

They \( \text{the Vaishnavas} \) accept the world as a Lila, but the true Lila is elsewhere in the eternal Brindavan. All the religions which believe in the personal Godhead accept the universe as a reality, a Lila or a creation made by the will of God, but temporal and not eternal. The aim is the eternal status above.

* The idea of a temporary Kingdom of heaven on earth is contained in the Puranas and conceived by some Vaishnava saints or poets; but it is a devotional idea, no philosophical basis is given for the expectation. I think the Tantric overcoming of imperfection is more individual, not collective.

* It is the Vaishnava theory — that if you only repeat the name of Hari it is enough — nothing else needed. Even if you do it by accident, you will go posthaste to Heaven. It has always seemed to be the apotheosis of laziness and incompetence. There are plenty of people who have a little Bhakti for Krishna but I don’t find them revelling in all the fruits of tapasya.

* If you can feel the Name bringing you peace, it should be able to bring everything else, bhakti, joy, the revelation of the Power and the Presence and the full feeling and consciousness of it to you. That is indeed the process of the Vaishnava sadhana and the power of the Name in it. Only, keep your poise and persevere.

* The Supramental is something in which the basis is absolute calm
and however intense a Divine Love there is in it it does not disturb the calm but increases its depth. Chaitanya’s experience was not that of Supermind, but of a Love and Ananda brought from above into the vital—the response of the vital is an extreme passion and exultation of Godward love and Ananda, the result of which is these *vikāras*. Chaitanya claimed this supremacy for the Radha experience because Ananda is higher than the experiences of the spiritual mind, Ananda being according to the Upanishads the supreme plane of experience. But this is a logical conclusion which cannot be accepted wholly—one must pass through the supermind to arrive to the highest Ananda and in the supermind there is a unification and harmonisation of all the divine Powers (Knowledge, etc. as well as Love and Ananda). Different sadhanas emphasise one aspect or another as the highest, but it is this union of all that must be the true base of the highest realisation and experience.

**Vaishnava Bhakti and the Integral Yoga**

It is not necessary to repeat past forms [*of Bhakti Yoga*]—to bring out the bhakti of the psychic being and give it whatever forms come naturally in the development is the proper way for our sadhana.

* What three signs [*of the Paramhansa*]? If you refer to the four conditions (child, madman, demon, inert), it is not Ramakrishna who invented that. It is an old Sanskrit sloka, *bālonmādapiśāca-jaḍavat*, describing the Paramhansa or rather the various forms of Paramhansahood. The Paramhansa is a particular grade of realisation, there are others supposed to be lower or higher. I have no objection to them [*vital manifestations of love and bhakti*] in their own place. But I must remind you that in my Yoga all vital movements must come under the control of the psychic and of the spiritual calm, knowledge and peace. If they conflict with the psychic or the spiritual control, they upset the balance and prevent the forming of the base of transformation.
If unbalance is good for other paths, that is the business of those who follow them. It does not suit mine.

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Everybody must be made to understand clearly that this is not a sadhana of emotional and egoistic bhakti, but of surrender. One who makes demands and threatens to commit suicide if his demands are not complied with, is not meant for this Yoga. . . .

This Yoga is not a Yoga of emotional egoistic vital bhakti full of demands and desires. There is no room in it for ābdār of any kind. It is only for those who surrender to the Divine and obey implicitly the directions given to them by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

The True Vaishnava Attitude

Your whole-hearted acceptance of the Vaishnava idea and bhakti becomes rather bewildering when it is coupled with an insistence that love cannot be given to the Divine until one has experience of the Divine. For what is more common in the Vaishnava attitude than the joy of bhakti for its own sake? “Give me bhakti,” it cries, “whatever else you may keep from me. Even if it is long before I can meet you, even if you delay to manifest yourself, let my bhakti, my seeking for you, my cry, my love, my adoration be always there.” How constantly the Bhakta has sung, “All my life I have been seeking you and still you are not there, but still I seek and cannot cease to seek and love and adore.” If it were really impossible to love God unless you first experience him, how could this be? In fact your mind seems to be putting the cart before the horse. One seeks after God first, with persistence or with passion, one finds him afterwards, some sooner than others, but most after a long seeking. One does not find him first, then seek after him. Even a glimpse only comes after long or fervent seeking. One has the love of God or at any rate some heart’s desire for him and afterwards one becomes aware of God’s love, its reply to the heart’s desire, its response of the supreme joy and Ananda. One does not say to God, “Show your love for
me first, shower on me the experience of yourself, satisfy my demand, then I will see whether I can love you so long as you deserve it.” It is surely the seeker who must seek and love first, follow the quest, become impassioned for the Sought — then only does the veil move aside and the Light be seen and the Face manifest that alone can satisfy the soul after its long sojourn in the desert.

Then again you may say, “Yes, but whether I love or not, I want, I have always wanted and now I want more and more, but I get nothing.” Yes, but wanting is not all. As you now begin to see, there are conditions that have to be met — like the purification of the heart. Your thesis was, “Once I want God, God must manifest to me, come to me, at least give glimpses of himself to me, the real solid concrete experiences, not mere vague things which I can’t understand or value. God’s Grace must answer my call for it, whether I yet deserve it or not — or else there is no Grace.” God’s Grace may indeed do that in certain cases, but where does the “must” come in? If God must do it, it is no longer God’s Grace, but God’s duty or an obligation or a contract or a treaty. The Divine looks into the heart and removes the veil at the moment which he knows to be the right moment to do it. You have laid stress on the bhakti theory that one has only to call his name and he must reply, he must at once be there. Perhaps, but for whom is this true? For a certain kind of Bhakta surely who feels the power of the Name, who has the passion of the Name and puts it into his cry. If one is like that, then there may be the immediate reply — if not, one has to become like that, then there will be the reply. But some go on using the Name for years, before there is an answer. Ramakrishna himself got it after a few months, but what months! and what a condition he had to pass through before he got it! Still he succeeded quickly because he had a pure heart already — and that divine passion in it.

It is not surely the Bhakta but the man of knowledge who demands experience first. He can say, “How can I know without experience?”, but even he goes on seeking like Tota Puri even though for thirty years, striving for the decisive realisation. It is
really the man of intellect, the rationalist who says, “Let God, if he exists, prove himself to me first, then I will believe, then I will make some serious and prolonged effort to explore him and see what he is like.”

All this does not mean that experience is irrelevant to sadhana — I certainly cannot have said such a stupid thing. What I have said is that the love and seeking of the Divine can be and ordinarily is there before the experience comes — it is an instinct, an inherent longing in the soul and it comes up as soon as certain coverings of the soul disappear or begin to disappear. The next thing I have said is that it is better to get the nature ready first (the purified heart and all that) before the “experiences” begin rather than the other way round and I base that on the many cases there have been of the danger of experiences before the heart and vital are ready for the true experience. Of course in many cases there is a true experience first, a touch of the Grace, but it is not something that lasts and is always there, but rather something that touches and withdraws and waits for the nature to get ready. But this is not so in every case, not even in many cases, I believe. One has to begin with the soul’s inherent longing, then the struggle with the nature to get the temple ready, then the unveiling of the Image, the permanent Presence in the sanctuary.

P.S. All this is of course only an answer couched in mental terms to your one objection or inability to conceive how one can love God without having first known Him or had experience of Him. But mental reasoning by itself leads to nothing — it is something in yourself that has to see and then there is no difficulty. Fortunately, you are moving near to that. Nor would I trouble at all about this point, if you did not make of it a support for depression and despair. Otherwise it would have no importance, since with one idea or with the other one can arrive at the goal because the soul drives towards it.

The Sunlit Way of Yoga

Peace was the very first thing that the Yogins and seekers of old
asked for and it was a quiet and silent mind — and that always
brings peace — that they declared to be the best condition for
realising the Divine. A cheerful and sunlit heart is the fit vessel for
the Ananda and who shall say that Ananda or what prepares it is
an obstacle to the Divine union? As for despondency, it is surely
terrible burden to carry on the way. One has to pass through
it sometimes, like Christian of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* through
the Slough of Despond, but its constant reiteration cannot be
anything but an obstacle. The Gita specially says, “Practise the
Yoga with an undespondent heart”, *anirvīnącetasā*.

I know perfectly well that pain and suffering and struggle
and excesses of despair are natural — though not inevitable —
on the way, — not because they are helps, but because they are
imposed on us by the darkness of this human nature out of
which we have to struggle into the Light. I do not suppose
Ramakrishna or Vivekananda would have recommended the
incidents you allude to as an example for others to follow —
they would surely have said that faith, fortitude, perseverance
were the better way. That after all was what they stuck to in
the end in spite of these bad moments and they would never
have dreamed of giving up the Yoga or the aspiration for the
Divine on the ground that they were unfit and not meant for the
realisation.

At any rate Ramakrishna told the story of Narada and the
ascetic Yogi and the Vaishnava Bhakta with approval of its
moral. I put it in my own language but keep the substance.
Narada on his way to Vaikuntha met a Yogi practising hard
tapasya on the hills. “O Narada,” cried the Yogi, “you are going
to Vaikuntha and will see Vishnu. I have been practising terrific
austerities all my life and yet I have not even now attained to
Him. Ask Him at least for me when I shall reach Him.” Then
Narada met a Vaishnava, a Bhakta who was singing songs to
Hari and dancing to his own singing, and he cried also, “O
Narada, you will see my Lord, Hari. Ask my Lord when I shall
reach Him and see His face.” On his way back Narada came
first to the Yogi. “I have asked Vishnu; you will realise Him
after six more lives.” The Yogi raised a cry of loud lamentation,
“What, so many austerities! such gigantic endeavours! and my reward is realisation after six long lives! O how hard to me is the Lord Vishnu.” Next Narada met again the Bhakta and said to him, “I have no good news for you. You will see the Lord, but only after a lakh of lives.” But the Bhakta leapt up with a great cry of rapture, “Oh, I shall see my Lord Hari! after a lakh of lives I shall see my Lord Hari! How great is the grace of the Lord.” And he began dancing and singing in a renewed ecstasy. Then Narada said, “Thou hast attained. Today thou shalt see the Lord!” Well, you may say, “What an extravagant story and how contrary to human nature!” Not so contrary as all that and in any case hardly more extravagant than the stories of Harishchandra and Shivi. Still I do not hold up the Bhakta as an example, for I myself insist on the realisation in this life and not after six or a lakh of births more. But the point of these stories is in the moral and surely when Ramakrishna told it, he was not ignorant that there was a sunlit path of Yoga! He even seems to say that it is the quicker way as well as the better! You are quite mistaken in thinking that the possibility of the sunlit path is a discovery or original invention of mine. The very first books on Yoga I read more than thirty years ago spoke of the dark and sunlit way and emphasised the superiority of the second over the other.

It is not either because I have myself trod the sunlit way or flinched from difficulty and suffering and danger. I have had my full share of these things and the Mother has had ten times her full share. But that was because the finders of the Way had to face these things in order to conquer. No difficulty that can come on the sadhak but has faced us on the path; against many we have had to struggle hundreds of times (in fact that is an understatement) before we could overcome; many still remain protesting that they have a right until the perfect perfection is there. But we have never consented to admit their inevitable necessity for others. It is in fact to ensure an easier path to others hereafter that we have borne that burden. It was with that object that the Mother once prayed to the Divine that whatever difficulties, dangers, sufferings were necessary for the path might be laid on
her rather than on others. It has been so far heard that as a result of daily and terrible struggles for years those who put an entire and sincere confidence in her are able to follow the sunlit path and even those who cannot, yet when they do put the trust find their path suddenly easy and, if it becomes difficult again, it is only when distrust, revolt, abhiman, or other darknesses come upon them. The sunlit path is not altogether a fable.

But you will ask what of those who cannot? Well, it is for them I am putting forth all my efforts to bring down the supramental Force within a measurable time. I know that it will descend but I am seeking its near descent and, with whatever dark obstruction of the earth-nature or furious inroads of the Asuric forces seeking to prevent it, it is approaching the terrestrial soil. The supramental is not, as you imagine, something cold, hard and rocklike. It bears within it the presence of the Divine Love as well as the Divine Truth and its reign here means for those who accept it the straight and thornless path on which there is no wall or obstacle of which the ancient Rishis saw the far-off promise.

The dark path is there and there are many who make like the Christians a gospel of spiritual suffering; many hold it to be the unavoidable price of victory. It may be so under certain circumstances, as it has been in so many lives at least at the beginning, or one may choose to make it so. But then the price has to be paid with resignation, fortitude or a tenacious resilience. I admit that if borne in that way the attacks of the Dark Forces or the ordeals they impose have a meaning. After each victory gained over them, there is then a sensible advance; often they seem to show us the difficulties in ourselves which we have to overcome and to say, “Here you must conquer us and here.” But all the same it is a too dark and difficult way which nobody should follow on whom the necessity does not lie.

In any case one thing can never help and that is to despond always and say, “I am unfit; I am not meant for the Yoga.” And worse still are these perilous mental formations such as you are always accepting that you must fare like X (one whose difficulty of exaggerated ambition was quite different from yours) and
that you have only six years etc. These are clear formations of the Dark Forces seeking not only to sterilise your aspiration but to lead you away and so prevent your sharing in the fruit of the victory hereafter. I do not know what Krishnaprem has said but his injunction, if you have rightly understood it, is one that cannot stand as valid, since so many have done Yoga relying on tapasya or anything else but not confident of any divine Grace. It is not that, but the soul’s demand for a higher Truth or a higher life that is indispensable. Where that is, the Divine Grace whether believed in or not, will intervene. If you believe, that hastens and facilitates things; if you cannot yet believe, still the soul’s aspiration will justify itself with whatever difficulty and struggle.

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Prāyopaveśana would be quite the wrong movement, it would be a sort of Satyagraha against the Divine. In essence it is an attempt to force the Divine to do what one wants instead of trusting to him to do what is best according to his own divine will and wisdom; it is a culminating act of vital impatience and disappointed desire, while the true movement is a pure aspiration and an ardent surrender.

After all, one has not a right to call on the Divine to manifest himself; it can come only as a response to a spiritual or psychic state of consciousness or to a long course of sadhana rightly done; or, if it comes before that or without any apparent reason, it is a grace; but one cannot demand or compel grace; grace is something spontaneous which wells out from the Divine Consciousness as a free flower of its being. The bhakta looks for it, but he is ready to wait in perfect reliance, even if need be all his life, knowing that it will come, never varying in his love and surrender because it does not come now or soon. That is the spirit of so many songs of the devotees, which you have sung yourself; I heard one such song from you in a record some time ago and a very beautiful song it was and beautifully sung—“Even if I have not won thee, O Lord, still I adore.”

What prevents you from having that, is the restless element
of vital impatience and ever recurring or persisting disappointment at not having what you want from the Divine. It is the idea, “I wish so much for it, surely I ought to have it; why is it withheld from me?” But wanting, however strongly, is not a passport to getting; there is something more to it than that. Our experience is that too much vital eagerness and insistence often blocks the way, it makes a sort of obstructing mass or a whirl of restlessness and disturbance which leaves no quiet space for the Divine to get in or for the thing wished for to come. Often it does come, but when the impatience has been definitely renounced and one waits, quietly open, for whatever may be (or for the time not be) given. But so often when you are preparing for a greater progress in the true devotion the habit of this vital element stands up and takes hold and interrupts the progress made.

The joylessness also comes from the vital. It is partly due to the disappointment but not solely, for it is a very common phenomenon when there is a pressure from the mind and soul on the vital to give up its attachments and its full unpurified acceptance of the outward life; it often gets a rajasic or tamasic vairagya instead of the sattwic kind, refuses to take a joy in anything, becomes dry, listless or unhappy, or it says, “Well, I have given up, I am giving up, but in exchange I must have the realisation you promise me; why don’t I get it, I can’t wait.” To get rid of that, it is best, even while observing it, not to identify oneself with it; if the mind or some part of the mind sanctions or justifies, it will persist or recur. If sorrow there must be, the other kind you described in the previous letter is preferable, the sadness that has a sweetness in it, no revolt, no despair, only the psychic longing for the true thing to come.

It is not by prayopavesana or anything of the kind that it must come, but by the increase of the pure and true bhakti. You have been constantly told so by us and lately by Krishnaprem and his guru; remember that she told you that the presence of Krishna during your singing was a sure sign that it would come, — not necessarily today or tomorrow or the day after, but that it would surely come. We can’t be all of us wrong and your vital
impatience only in the right. For heaven’s sake, get rid of it and settle down to quiet aspiration and an ever growing devotion and surrender leaving it to Krishna to do what he is sure to do in his own way and time.

Ordinary Life, Vaishnava Traditions and the Supramental Yoga

Even if things were as bad as you say, I don’t see how going away would help you in the least — (it would certainly not make you non-human); some have tried before this device of progress by departure and it has never succeeded, they have had to come back and face their difficulty. Why do you always come back to this notion of going away or entertain it at all? It is quite meaningless from any rational point of view; it only encourages the adverse Force which wants to take you away from the path to return to the attack, and it prevents the speedy conversion of that dissatisfied part of your vital which is always kicking against the pricks — the pricks of your soul and of your spiritual destiny. However sad the prospect may seem to this dissatisfied vital fragment, your destiny is to be a Yogi and the sooner it reconciles itself to the prospect the better for it and for all the other personalities in you. Your alleged or inferred unfitness is a delusion, an imagination of this vital part; it doesn’t exist. If persistence of difficulties is a proof of unfitness, then there is nobody in this Asram who is fit for the Yoga. We would all have to pack up our belongings or give them away and start either to get back to the ordinary world or en route for the Himalayas.

You describe the rich human egoistic life you might have lived and you say “not altogether a wretched life, you will admit”. On paper, it sounds even very glowing and satisfactory, as you describe it. But there is no real or final satisfaction in it, except for those who are too common or trivial to seek anything else, and even they are not really satisfied or happy, — and in the end, it tires and pallet. Sorrow and illness, clash and strife, disappointment, disillusionment and all kinds of human suffering come and beat its glow to pieces — and then decay and death.
That is the vital egoistic life as man has found it throughout the ages, and yet it is that which this part of your vital regrets? How do you fail to see, when you lay so much stress on the desirability of a merely human consciousness, that suffering is its badge? When the vital resists the change from the human into the divine consciousness, what it is defending is its right to sorrow and suffering and all the rest of it, varied and relieved no doubt by some vital or mental pleasures and satisfactions, but very partially relieved by them and only for a time. In your own case, it was already beginning to pall on you and that was why you turned from it. No doubt, there were the joys of the intellect and of artistic creation, but a man cannot be an artist alone; there is the outer quite human lower vital part and, in all but a few, it is the most clamorous and insistent part. But what was dissatisfied in you? It was the soul within, first of all, and through it the higher mind and the higher vital. Why then find fault with the Divine for misleading you when it turned you to the Yoga or brought you here? It was simply answering to the demand of your own inner being and the higher parts of your nature. If you have so much difficulty and become restless, it is because you are still divided and something in your lower vital still regrets what it has lost or, as a price for its adhesion or a compensation — a price to be immediately paid down to it, — asks for something similar and equivalent in the spiritual life. It refuses to believe that there is a greater compensation, a larger vital life waiting for it in which there shall not be the old inadequacy and unrest and final dissatisfaction. The foolishness is not in the Divine guidance, but in the irrational and obstinate resistance of this confused and obscure part of you to the demand, made not only by this Yoga, but by all Yoga — to the necessary conditions for the satisfaction of the aspiration of your own soul and higher nature.

The “human” vital consciousness has moved always between these two poles, the ordinary vital life which cannot satisfy and the recoil from it to the ascetic solution. India has gone fully through that see-saw; now Europe is beginning once more after a full trial to feel the failure of the mere vital egoistic life.
The traditional Yogas — to which you appeal — are founded upon the movement between these two poles. On one side are Shankara and Buddha and most go, if not by the same road, yet in that direction; on the other are Vaishnava or Tantric lines which try to combine asceticism with some sublimation of the vital impulse. And where did these lines end? They fell back to the other pole, to a vital invasion, even corruption and a loss of their spirit. At the present day the general movement is towards an attempt at reconciliation, and you have alluded sometimes to some of the protagonists of this attempt and asked me my opinion about them, yours being unfavourable. But these men are not mere charlatans, and if there is anything wrong with them (on which I do not pronounce), it can only be because they are unable to resist the magnetic pull of this lower pole of the egoistic vital desire-nature. And if they are unable to resist, it is because they have not found the true force which will not only neutralise that pull and prevent deterioration and downward lapse, but transform and utilise and satisfy in their own deeper truth, instead of destroying or throwing away, the life-force and the embodiment in matter; for that can only be done by the supermind power and by no other.

You appeal to the Vaishnava-Tantric traditions, to Chaitanya, Ramprasad, Ramakrishna. I know something about them and, if I did not try to repeat them, it is because I do not find in them the solution, the reconciliation I am seeking. Your quotation from Ramprasad does not assist me in the least — and it does not support your thesis either. Ramprasad is not speaking of an embodied, but of a bodiless and invisible Divine — or visible only in a subtle form to the inner experience. When he speaks of maintaining his claim or case against the Mother until she lifts him into her lap, he is not speaking of any outer vital or physical contact, but of an inner psychic experience; precisely, he is protesting against her keeping him in the external vital and physical nature and insists on her taking him on the psycho-spiritual plane into spiritual union with her. All that is very good and very beautiful, but it is not enough; the union has indeed to be realised in the inner psycho-spiritual experience first, because
without that nothing sound or lasting can be done; but also there must be a realisation of the Divine in the outer consciousness and life, in the vital and physical planes on their own essential lines. It is that which, without your mind understanding it or how it is to be done, you are asking for, and I too; only I see the necessity of a vital transformation, while you seem to think and to demand that it should be done without any radical transformation, leaving the vital as it is. In the beginning, before I discovered the secret of the supermind, I myself tried to seek the reconciliation through an association of the spiritual consciousness with the vital, but my experience and all experience shows that this leads to nothing definite and final, — it ends where it began, midway between the two poles of human nature. An association is not enough, a transformation is indispensable.

The tradition of later Vaishnava bhakti is an attempt to sublimate the vital impulses through love by turning human love towards the Divine. It made a strong and intense effort and had many rich and beautiful experiences; but its weakness was just there, that it remained valid only as an inner experience turned towards the inner Divine, but it stopped at that point. Chaitanya’s prema was nothing but a psychic divine love with a strong sublimated vital manifestation. But the moment Vaishnavism before or after him made an attempt at greater externalisation, we know what happened — a vitalistic deterioration, much corruption and decline. You cannot appeal to Chaitanya’s example as against psychic or divine love; it was not something merely vital-human; in its essence, though not in its form, it was very much the first step in the transformation, which we ask of the sadhaks, to make their love psychic and use the vital not for its own sake, but as an expression of the soul’s realisation. It is the first step and perhaps for some it may be sufficient, for we are not asking everybody to become supramental; but for any full manifestation on the physical plane the supramental is indispensable.

In this later Vaishnava tradition the sadhana takes the form of an application of human vital love in all its principal turns to the Divine; viraha, abhimāna, even complete separation (like the
departure of Krishna to Mathura) are made prominent elements of this Yoga. But all that was only meant — in the sadhana itself, not in the Vaishnava poems — as a passage of which the end is *milana* or complete union; but the stress laid on the untoward elements by some would almost seem to make strife, separation, *abhimāna*, the whole means if not the very object of this kind of *prema-yoga*. Again, this method was only applied to the inner, not to a physically embodied Divine and had a reference to certain states and reactions of the inner consciousness in its seeking after the Divine. In the relations with the embodied Divine manifestation, or, I may add, of the disciple with the Guru, such things might rise as a result of human imperfection, but they were not made part of the theory of the relations. I do not think they formed a regular and authorised part of the relations of the bhaktas to Chaitanya or of the disciples at Dakshineshwar towards Ramakrishna! On the contrary, the relation of the disciple to the Guru in the Guruvada is supposed always to be that of worship, respect, complete happy confidence, unquestioning acceptance of the guidance. The application of the unchanged vital relations to the embodied Divine or the Guru may lead and has led to movements which are not conducive to the progress of the Yoga.

Ramakrishna’s Yoga was also turned only to an inner realisation of the inner Divine, — nothing less but also nothing more. I believe his sentence about the claim of the sadhak on the Divine for whom one has sacrificed everything was the assertion of an inner and not an outer claim, on the inner rather than on any physically embodied Divine: it was a claim for the full spiritual union, the God-lover seeking the Divine, but the Divine also giving himself and meeting the God-lover. There can be no objection to that; such a claim all seekers of the Divine have; but as to the modalities of this Divine meeting, it does not carry us much farther. In any case, my object is a realisation on the physical plane and I cannot consent merely to repeat Ramakrishna. I seem to remember too that for a long time he was withdrawn into himself, all his life was not spent with his disciples! He got his siddhi first in retirement and when
he came out and received everyone—well, a few years of it wore out his body. To that, I suppose, he had no objection; he even pronounced a theory, when Keshav Chandra was dying, that spiritual experience ought to wear out the body! But at the same time, when asked why he got his illness in the throat, he answered that it was the sins of his disciples which they threw upon him and he had to swallow! Not being satisfied, as he was, with an inner liberation alone, I cannot accept these ideas or these results, for it does not sound to me like a successful meeting of the Divine and the sadhak on the physical plane, however successful it might have been for the inner life. Krishna did great things and was very clearly a manifestation of the Divine. But I remember a passage of the Mahabharata in which he complains of the unquiet life his followers and adorers gave him, their constant demands, reproaches, their throwing of their unregenerate vital nature upon him. And in the Gita he speaks of this human world as a transient and sorrowful affair and, in spite of his gospel of divine action, seems almost to admit that to leave it is after all the last solution! The traditions of the past are very great in their own place,—in the past; but I do not see why we should merely repeat them and not go farther. In the spiritual development of the consciousness upon earth the great past ought to be followed by a greater future.

There is the rub that you seem all to ignore entirely, the difficulties of the physical embodiment and the divine realisation on the physical plane. For most, it seems to be a simple alternative; either the Divine comes down in full power and the thing is done—no difficulty, no necessary conditions, no law or process, only miracle and magic, or else, well, this can't be the Divine! Again you all (or almost all) insist on the Divine becoming human, remaining in the human consciousness and you protest against any attempt to make the human divine; on the other hand there is an outcry of disappointment, bewilderment, distrust, perhaps indignation, if there are human difficulties, if there is strain in the body, a swaying struggle with adverse forces, obstacles, checks, illness, and some begin to say, “Oh, there is nothing divine here!”—as if one could remain, vitally and physically, in the
untransformed undivinised human consciousness, in unchanged contact with it, satisfying its demands, and yet be immune under all circumstances and in all conditions against strain and struggle and illness. If I want to divinise the human consciousness, to bring down the supramental, the Truth-Consciousness, the Light, the Force into the physical to transform it, to create there a great fullness of Truth and Light and Power and Bliss and Love, and make these other things impossible, the response is repulsion, or fear, or unwillingness — or a doubt whether it is possible. On one side there is the claim that illness and the rest should be impossible, on the other a violent rejection of the only condition under which these things can become impossible. I know that this is the natural inconsistency of the human vital mind wanting two inconsistent and incompatible things together; but that is one reason why it is necessary to transform the human and put something a little more luminous in its place.

But is the Divine then something so terrible, horrible or repellent that the idea of its entry into the physical, its divinising of the human should create this shrinking, refusal, revolt or fear? I can understand that the unregenerate vital attached to its own petty sufferings and pleasures, to the brief ignorant drama of life, should shrink from what will change it. But why should a God-lover, a God-seeker, a sadhak fear the divinisation of the consciousness! Why should he object to becoming one in nature with what he seeks, why should he recoil from sādṛśya-muṅkta? Behind this fear there are usually two causes: first, there is the feeling of the vital that it will have to cease to be obscure, crude, muddy, egoistic, unrefined (spiritually), full of stimulating desires and small pleasures and interesting sufferings (for it shrinks even from the Ananda which will replace them); next, there is some vague ignorant idea of the mind, due, I suppose, to the ascetic tradition, that the divine nature is something cold, bare, empty, austere, aloof, without the glorious riches of the egoistic human vital life. As if there were not a divine vital and as if that divine vital is not itself and, when it gets the means to manifest, will not make the life on earth also infinitely more full of beauty, love, radiance, warmth, fire, intensity and divine passion and
capacity for bliss than the present impotent, suffering, pettily and transiently excited and soon tired vitality of the still so imperfect human creation!

But you will say that it is not the Divine from which you recoil, rather you accept and ask for it (provided that it is not too divine), but what you object to is the supramental—grand, aloof, incomprehensible, unapproachable, a sort of austere Nirakara Brahman. The supramental so described is a bogey created by this part of your vital mind in order to frighten itself and justify its attitude. Behind this strange description there seems to be an idea that the supramental is a new version of the Vedantic featureless and incommunicable Parabrahman, vast, grand, cold, empty, remote, devastating, overwhelming; it is not quite that, of course, since it can come down, but for all practical purposes it is just as bad! It is curious that you admit your ignorance of what the supramental can be, and yet you in these moods not only pronounce categorically what it is like, but reject emphatically my experience about it as of no practical validity or not valid for anybody but myself! I have not insisted, I have answered only casually because I am not asking you now to be non-human or divine, much less to be supramental; but as you are always returning to this point when you have these attacks and making it the pivot—or at least a main support—of your depression, I am obliged to answer. The supramental is not grand, aloof, cold and austere; it is not something opposed to or inconsistent with a full vital and physical manifestation; on the contrary, it carries in it the only possibility of the full fullness of the vital force and the physical life on earth. It is because it is so, because it was so revealed to me and for no other reason that I have followed after it and persevered till I came into contact with it and was able to draw down some power of it and its influence. I am concerned with the earth and not with worlds beyond for their own sake; it is a terrestrial realisation that I seek and not a flight to distant summits. All other Yogas regard this life as an illusion or a passing phase; the supramental Yoga alone regards it as a thing created by the Divine for a progressive manifestation and takes the fulfilment
of the life and the body for its object. The supramental is simply
the Truth-Consciousness and what it brings in its descent is the
full truth of life, the full truth of consciousness in Matter. One
has indeed to rise to high summits to reach it, but the more
one rises, the more one can bring down below. No doubt, life
and body have not to remain the ignorant, imperfect, impotent
things they are now; but why should a change to fuller life-
power, fuller body-power be considered something aloof, cold
and undesirable? The utmost Ananda the body and life are now
capable of is a brief excitement of the vital mind or the nerves
or the cells which is limited, imperfect and soon passes; with the
supramental change all the cells, nerves, vital forces, embodied
mental forces can become filled with a thousandfold Ananda,
capable of an intensity of bliss which passes description and
which need not fade away. How aloof, repellent and undesirable!
The supramental love means an intense unity of soul with soul,
mind with mind, life with life, and an entire flooding of the
body consciousness with the physical experience of oneness, the
presence of the Beloved in every part, in every cell of the body.
Is that too something aloof and grand but undesirable? With
the supramental change, the very thing on which you insist, the
possibility of the free physical meeting of the embodied Divine
with the sadhak without conflict of forces and without undesir-
able reactions becomes possible, assured and free. That too is, I
suppose, something aloof and undesirable? I could go on — for
pages, but this is enough for the moment.

Different Approaches through Love and Bhakti

It seems to me that these differences of valuation come from
the mind laying stress on one side or another of the approach
to the Divine or exalting one aspect of realisation over another.
When there is the approach through the heart, through Love
and Bhakti, its highest culmination is in a transcendent Ananda,
an unspeakable Bliss or Beatitude of union with the Divine
through Love. The school of Chaitanya laid especial and indeed
sole emphasis on this way and made this the whole reality of
Krishna consciousness. But the transcendent Ananda is there at the origin and end of all existence and this is not and cannot be the sole way to it. One can arrive at it also through the Vasudeva consciousness, which is a wider, more mentalised approach — as in the method of the Gita where knowledge, works, bhakti are all centred in Krishna, the One, the Supreme, the All and arrive through the cosmic consciousness to the luminous transcendence. There is the way too described in the Taittiriya Upanishad, the Vedanta’s Gospel of Bliss. These are certainly wider methods, for they take up the whole existence through all its parts and ways of being to the Divine. If less intense at their starting point, a vaster and slower movement, there is no reason to suppose that they are less intense on their summits of arrival. It is the same transcendence to which all arrive, either with a large movement gathering up everything spiritual in us to take it there in a vast sublimation, or in a single intense uplifting from one point, a single exaltation leaving all the rest aside. But who shall say which is profounder of the two? Concentrated love has a profundity of its own which cannot be measured; concentrated wisdom has a wider profundity but one cannot say that it is deeper.

Cosmic values are only reflections of the truth of the Transcendence in a lesser truth of time experience which is separative and sees diversely a thousand aspects of the One. As one rises through the mind or any part of the manifested being, any one or more of these aspects can become more and more sublimated and tend towards its supreme transcendental intensity, and whatever aspect is so experienced is declared by the spiritualised mental consciousness to be the supreme thing. But when one goes beyond mind all tends not only to sublimate but to fuse together until the separated aspects recover their original unity, indivisible in the absoluteness of all made one. Mind can conceive and have experience of existence without consciousness or Ananda and this receives its utmost expression in the inconscience attributed to Matter. So also it can conceive of Ananda or Love as a separate principle; it even feels consciousness and existence losing themselves in a trance or swoon of
Love or Ananda. So too the limited personal loses itself in the illimitable Person, the lover in the supreme Beloved, or else the personal in the Impersonal, — the lover feels himself immersed, losing himself in the transcendental reality of Love or Ananda.

The personal and the impersonal are themselves posited and experienced by mind as separate realities — and one or other is declared and seen as supreme, so that the personal can have *laya* in the Impersonal or on the contrary the impersonal disappear into the absolute reality of the supreme and divine Person; the impersonal in that view is only an attribute or power of the personal Divine. But at the summit of spiritual experience passing beyond mind one begins to feel the fusion of all these things into one. Consciousness, Existence, Ananda return to their invisible unity, Sachchidananda. The personal and the impersonal become irrevocably one, so that to posit one as against the other appears as an act of ignorance. This tendency of unification is the basis of the supramental consciousness and experience; for cosmic or creative purposes the supermind can put forward one aspect prominently where that is needed, but it is aware of all the rest behind it or contained in it and does not admit into its view any separation or opposition anywhere. For that reason a supramental creation would be a multifold harmony and not a separative process fragmenting or analysing the One into parts and setting these parts over against each other or else putting them contradictorily against each other and having afterwards to synthesise and piece them together in order to arrive at harmony or else to exclude some or all of the parts in order to realise the indivisible One.

You speak of the Vaishnava school emphasising the personal felicities, as in the classification of the *bhāvas*, and you say that these are short and quick feelings and lack in vastness or amplitude. No doubt, when they are first felt and as they are felt by the limited consciousness in its ordinary functioning and movement; but that is only because the emotional in man with this imperfect bodily instrument acts largely by spasms of intensity when it wants to sublimate and cannot maintain either the continuity or the extension or the sublimated paroxysm of
these things. But as the individual becomes cosmic (the universalising of the individual without his losing his higher individuality as a divine centre is one of the processes which lead towards the supramental Truth), this disability begins to disappear. The truth behind the dāśya or madhura or any other bhāva or fusion of bhāvas becomes a vast and ample continuous state,—if by chance they lose something of their briefer intensities by this extension of themselves, they recover them a thousandfold in the movement of the universalised individual towards the Transcendence. There is an ever enlarging experience which takes up the elements of spiritual realisation and in this uplifting and transforming process they become other and greater things than they were and more and more they take their place by sublimation, first in the spiritual-cosmic, then in the all-embracing transcendent whole.

The difference of view between Shankara and Ramanuja and on the other side Chaitanya about Krishna arises from the turn of their experience. Krishna was only an aspect of Vishnu to the others because that ecstatic form of love and bhakti which had become associated with Krishna was not for them the whole. The Gita, like Chaitanya, but from a different viewpoint, regarded Krishna as the Divine himself. To Chaitanya he was Love and Ananda, and Love and Ananda being for him the highest transcendental experience, so Krishna too must be the Supreme. For the writer of the Gita, Krishna was the source of Knowledge and Power as well as Love, the Destroyer, Preserver, Creator in one, so necessarily Vishnu was only an aspect of this universal Divine. In the Mahabharat indeed Krishna comes as an incarnation of Vishnu, but that can be turned by taking it that it was through the Vishnu aspect as his frontal appearance that he manifested, for that the greater Godhead can manifest later than others is logical if we consider the manifestation as progressive,—just as Vishnu is in the Veda a younger Indra, Upendra, but gains upon his elder and subsequently takes place above him in the Trimurti.

I cannot say much about the Vaishnava idea of the form of Krishna. Form is the basic means of manifestation and without
Bhakti Yoga and Vaishnavism

it it may be said that the manifestation of anything is not complete. Even if the Formless logically precedes Form, yet it is not illogical to assume that in the Formless, Form is inherent and already existent in a mystic latency, otherwise how could it be manifested? For any other process would be the creation of the non-existent, not manifestation. If so, it would be equally logical to assume that there is an eternal form of Krishna, a spirit body. As for the highest Reality, it is no doubt absolute Existence, but is it only that? Absolute Existence as an abstraction may exclude everything else from itself and amount to a sort of very positive zero; but Absolute Existence as a reality — who shall define and say what is or is not in its inconceivable depths, its illimitable Mystery? Mind can ordinarily conceive of the Absolute Existence only as a negation of its own concepts spatial, temporal or other. But it cannot tell what is at the basis of manifestation or what manifestation is or why there is any manifestation at all out of its positive zero — and the Vaishnavas, we must remember, do not admit this conception as the absolute and original truth of the Divine. It is therefore not rigidly impossible that what we conceive and perceive as spatial form may correspond to some mysterious power of the spaceless Absolute. I do not say all that as a definite statement of Truth, I am only pointing out that the Vaishnava position on its own ground is far from being logically or metaphysically untenable.

Love and Bhakti for Krishna

As for Krishna, why not approach simply and straight? The simple approach means trust. If you pray, trust that he hears. If the reply takes long in coming, trust that he knows and loves and that he is wisest in the choice of the time. Meanwhile quietly clear the ground, so that he may not have to trip over stone and jungle when he comes. That is my suggestion and I know what I am saying — for whatever you may say, I know very well all human difficulties and struggles and I know of the cure. That is why I press always on the things that would minimise and shorten the struggles and difficulties, — the psychic turn, faith, perfect
and simple confidence and reliance. These, let me remind you, are tenets of the Vaishnava Yoga. Of course, there is the other Vaishnava way which swings between yearning and despair — ardent seeking and the pangs of viraha. It is that you seem to be following and I do not deny that one can arrive by that as one can by almost any way, if followed sincerely. But then those who follow it find a rasa even in viraha, in the absence and the caprice of the Divine Lover. Some of them have sung that they have followed after him all their lives but always he has slipped away from their vision and even in that they find a rasa and never cease following. But you find no rasa in it. So you cannot expect me to approve of that for you. Follow after Krishna by all means, but follow with the determination to arrive: don’t do it with the expectation of failure or admit any possibility of breaking off half-way.

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As for the “hostile forces”, it is quite true that to persuade the sadhak to cut off outer contact with us on the plea of solitude and intense sadhana, is a favourite device of theirs and has often led to disaster. It gives them a freer field to bring in their own influence and represent it as the divine influence or as our own influence, and it ends often by a revolt and finally the sadhak cuts off the inner relation also or even turns hostile. This has happened fairly often and that is one reason why I have usually discouraged that or any kind of complete solitude. Absence from darshan for a short time if there is good reason for it, but more than that is inadvisable.

The direct approach to Krishna is not safe or easy; it can sometimes be terribly risky, if there is anything in the sadhak that interferes with the clarity and singleness of his attitude. In that case any wrong desire, vanity, pride, sexual impurity, ambition, or any other pronounced weakness may open the way to serious distortion of the sadhana, turning into wrong ways, breakdown or collapse, even to spiritual perdition. Krishna’s own influence cannot be a wrong influence, if it is really his, but it is easy to mistake and accept some other influence as his. Especially, he is
the Lord of Love and Beauty and Delight, and nothing is easier for men who are always going in the wrong way in search of these things, to bring their wrong ways into their search for him also. That experience must be one of the reasons why the seers insist on the approach through the guru and say that Krishna cannot be attained otherwise. It is the reason why they insist on vairagya, detachment from the ordinary aims and ends of human nature as so necessary. That is also why Krishna does not like to show himself until the field is clear for him! The intervention of some power or influence that represents itself as he, even puts on an imitation of his form or voice would be fatal if accepted; but even his real manifestation might bring about an upset in someone not really ready for it. One must be on guard against these dangers and it is the guru who can interpose himself as a shield against them.

The identification of the guru with the Divine is a common rule, not peculiar to the Vaishnava bhakti. Ordinarily, so far as the outer mind is concerned, it is a firm belief; the outer mind can believe, can by its faith have some feeling of it, can with the help of the heart worship, adore, serve with humility and fidelity; ordinarily, this is enough and it prepares besides for something deeper. But to realise the identity is another matter, [incomplete]

I do not know that I can answer your question about what Krishnaprem means by Krishna’s light. It is certainly not what people ordinarily mean by knowledge. He may mean the light of the Divine Consciousness, or if you like, the light that is the Divine Consciousness or the light that comes from it or he may mean the luminous being of Krishna in which all things are in their supreme truth,—the truth of Knowledge, the truth of Bhakti, the truth of ecstasy and Ananda, everything is there.

There is also a manifestation of Light—the Upanishads speak of jyotir brahma, the Light that is Brahman. Very often the sadhak feels a flow of Light upon him or around him or a flow of Light invading his centres or even his whole being and body, penetrating and illumining every cell and in that Light
there grows the spiritual consciousness and one becomes open
to all or many of its workings and realisations. Appositely I
have a review of a book of Ramdas (of the Vision) before me in
which is described such an experience got by the repetition of the
Rama mantra, but, if I understand rightly, after a long and rigor-
ous self-discipline. “The mantra having stopped automatically,
he beheld a small circular light before his mental vision. This
yielded him thrills of delight. This experience having continued
for some days, he felt a dazzling light like lightning, flashing
before his eyes, which ultimately permeated and absorbed him.
Now an inexpressible transport of bliss filled every pore of his
physical frame.” It does not always come like that — very often
it comes by stages or at long intervals, at first, working on the
consciousness till it is ready.

We speak here also of Krishna’s light — Krishna’s light in
the mind, Krishna’s light in the vital; but it is a special light — in
the mind it brings clarity, freedom from obscurity, mental error
and perversion; in the vital it clears out all perilous stuff and
where it is there is a pure and divine happiness and gladness.

There are some however who seem to regard this invasion
of Light not merely as a thing without value but a thing of evil
or, possibly, one that can be such and so to be distrusted: for
I have before me a letter describing an experience very similar
to Ramdas’s, but it was condemned by the writer’s Guru as an
attempt at possession by a devil to be dispelled by uttering the
name of Ramakrishna!

But why limit oneself, insist on one thing alone and shut out
every other? Whether it be by Bhakti or by Light or by Ananda
or by Peace or by any other means whatsoever that one gets
the initial realisation of the Divine, to get it is the thing and all
means are good that bring it.

If it is Bhakti that one insists on, it is by Bhakti that Bhakti
comes and Bhakti in its fullness is nothing but an entire self-
giving, as Krishnaprem very rightly indicates. Then all medita-
tion, all tapasya, all means of prayer or mantra must have
that as its end and it is when one has progressed sufficiently in
that that the Divine Grace descends and the realisation comes
and develops till it is complete. But the moment of its advent is
chosen by the wisdom of the Divine alone and one must have
the strength to go on till it arrives; for when all is truly ready it
cannot fail to come.

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As to the point that puzzles you, it only arises from a confusion
between the feeling of the devotee and the observation of the
observer. Of course the devotee loves Krishna because Krishna
is lovable and not for any other reason—that is his feeling
and his true feeling. He has no time to bother his head about
what in himself made him able to love, the fact that he does
love is sufficient for him and he does not need to analyse his
emotions. The Grace of Krishna consists for him in Krishna’s
very lovelableness, in his showing of himself to the devotee, in his
call, the cry of his flute. That is enough for the heart or, if there
is anything more, it is the yearning that others or all may hear
the flute, see the face, feel all the beauty and rapture of this love.

It is not the heart of the devotee but the mind of the observer
that questions how it is that the Gopis were called or responded
at once and others—the Brahmin women, for instance—were
not called or did not respond at once. Once the mind puts the
question, there are two possible answers, the mere will of Krish-
na without any reason, what the mind would call his absolute
divine choice or his arbitrary divine caprice or else the readiness
of the heart that is called, and that amounts to 

\[ \textit{adhikāri-bhedā} \]

A third reply would be—circumstances, as for instance, the
parking off of the spiritual ground into closed preserves. But how
can circumstances prevent the Grace from acting? In spite of the
parking off, it works—Christians, Mahomedans do answer to
the Grace of Krishna. Tigers, ghouls must love if they see him,
hear his flute? Yes, but why do some hear it and see him, others
not? We are thrown back on the two alternatives, Krishna’s
Grace calls whom it wills to call without any determining reason
for the choice or rejection, his mercy or his withholding or at
least delaying of his mercy, or else he calls the hearts that are
ready to vibrate and leap up at his call—and even there he
waits till the moment has come. To say that it does not depend
on outward merit or appearance of fitness is no doubt true; the something that was ready to wake in spite, it may be, of many hard layers in which it was enclosed, may be something visible to Krishna and not to us. It was there perhaps long before the flute began to play, but he was busy melting the hard layers so that the heart in its leap might not be pressed back by them when the awakening notes came. The Gopis heard and rushed out into the forest — the others did not — or did they think it was only some rustic music or some rude cowherd lover fluting to his sweetheart, not a call that learned and cultured or virtuous ears could recognise as the call of the Divine? There is something to be said for the \textit{adhikāri-bheda}. But of course it must be understood in a large sense, — some may have the \textit{adhistāna} for recognising Krishna's flute, some for the call of Christ, some for the dance of Shiva — to each his own way and his nature's answer to the Divine Call. \textit{Adhikāra} cannot be stated in rigid mental terms, it is something spiritual and subtle, something mystic and secret between the called and the Caller.

As for the swelled head, the theory of Grace may no doubt contribute to it, though I should imagine that the said head never felt the Grace but only the magnanimity of its own ego. The swelling may come equally in the way of personal effort as by the craving for Grace. It is fundamentally not due to either, but to a natural predisposition to this kind of oedema.

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If Krishna was always and by nature cold and distant (Lord, what a discovery — Krishna of all people!), how could human devotion and aspiration come near him — he and it would soon be like the North and South Pole, growing icier and icier, always facing each other but never seeing because of the earth's bulge. Also, if Krishna did not want the human bhakta as well as the bhakta wanting him, who could get at him? — he would be always sitting on the snows of the Himalayas like Shiva. History describes him otherwise and he is usually charged with being too warm and sportive.

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If one wants Krishna, one gets Krishna — but he is a sufficiently trying Deity and does not come at once, though he may come suddenly at any time. But usually one has to want him so badly and obstinately that one is prepared to pay any price. One has to know how to wait as well as to want — to go on insisting and insisting without taking heed of even the longest denial. The psychic can do that — but the mind and the vital have to learn how to do it also.

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Certainly Krishna is credited with much caprice, difficult dealings and a playfulness (lila!) which the played-with do not always immediately appreciate. But there is a reasoning as well as a hidden method in his caprices, and when he does come out of it and takes a fancy to be nice to you, he has a supreme attractiveness, charm and allurement which compensates and more than compensates for all you have suffered.

*  

Well, why should not Krishna ride a horse if he so wants?1 His actions or habits cannot be fixed by the human mind or by an immutable tradition. Especially Krishna is a law to himself. Perhaps he was in a hurry to get to the place where he wanted to flute.

*  

The Gopis are not ordinary people in the proper sense of the word — they are extraordinary by their extremeness of love, passionate devotion, unreserved self-giving. Whoever has that, however humble his position in other respects, learning, external sanctity etc. etc., can easily follow after Krishna and reach him; that seems to me the sense of the symbol of the Gopis. There are many other significances, of course — that is only one among the many.

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1 The correspondent wrote about a disciple who had a vision of Krishna galloping on a horse. — Ed.
Radha is the personification of the absolute love for the Divine, total and integral in all parts of the being from the highest spiritual to the physical, bringing the absolute self-giving and total consecration of all the being and calling down into the body and the most material Nature the supreme Ananda.

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The coming of sex on seeing the image of Krishna and Radha is due to the past association of sex with the cult of Radha-Krishna. But in fact the image has nothing to do with sex. The true symbol for it would not be the human sex-attraction, but the soul, the psychic, hearing the call of the Divine and flowering into the complete love and surrender that brings the supreme Ananda. That is what Radha and Krishna by their divine union bring about in the human consciousness and it is so that you must regard it, throwing aside the old sex-associations.

Love of Krishna and This Yoga

What you were told of the incompatibility of love and adoration of Krishna with this Yoga, is not true. There is not and cannot be any such incompatibility. Otherwise we would not have encouraged you in your aspiration. You can seek for him quite as well here as in Brindaban.

* 

As regards Krishna and devotion, I think I have already answered more than once. I have no objection at all to the worship of Krishna or the Vaishnava form of devotion, nor is there any incompatibility between Vaishnava bhakti and my supramental Yoga. There is in fact no special and exclusive form of supramental Yoga; all ways can lead to the Supermind, just as all ways can lead to the Divine.

Certainly, I will help you and am helping and will always help you; the idea that I can stop doing it or will send you away has no sense in it. If you persevere, you cannot fail to get the permanent bhakti you want and the realisation you want, but
you should learn to put an entire reliance on Krishna to give it when he finds all ready and the time come. If he wants you to clear out imperfections and impurities first, that is after all understandable. I don’t see why you should not succeed in doing it, now that your attention is being so constantly turned on it. To see them clearly and acknowledge them is the first step, to have the firm will to reject them is the next, to separate yourself from them entirely so that if they enter at all it will be as foreign elements, no longer parts of your normal nature but suggestions from outside, brings their last state; even, once seen and rejected, they may automatically fall away and disappear; but for most the process takes time. These things are not peculiar to you; they are parts of universal human nature; but they can, do and will disappear.

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But I have already told you more than once that I have no objection to your seeking Krishna or to your asking for Ananda or milan or anything else. I have never pressed you or others either to seek after Supermind or to accept me as an Avatar. These things have risen as an answer to questions put by yourself or others and I have treated them as matters of knowledge. But each must go by his own way and his own nature to his own goal. Ahaituki bhakti according to the Vaishnava ideal is the highest way and also the quickest, but if one does not feel equal to it, sahaituki bhakti will do well enough. Or if one has no turn for bhakti at all, there are plenty of other ways. Or if one does not care to follow any way, there is, as I said, in answer to X’s question, the pressure of something in the nature to find the Self, if that is what it is after, or God or Krishna or the Mother or whatever it may be.

If you know the urge in you, well, follow it straight — there is no need of questioning or going this side or that. Follow the heart’s urge till it reaches what it is seeking.