Chapter Three

The Descent of the Higher
Consciousness and Force

The Purpose of the Descent

The descent is that of the powers of the higher consciousness which is above the head. It usually descends from centre to centre till it has occupied the whole being. But at the beginning the action is very variable. It is only when the Peace from above has not only descended but established itself in the whole system that there is a continuous action. The descent comes in order to transform the consciousness but the transformation takes time. It is not done all in a moment.

*  

The Force descends for two things:

1. To transform the nature.
2. To carry on the work through the instrument.

At first one is not conscious of either working, afterwards one becomes conscious of the Force working but not of how it works. Finally one becomes conscious entirely and in detail.

*  

Naturally, when any of the higher consciousness descends it works to change the lower consciousness into a part of itself.

Calling in the Higher Consciousness

All limitations [in one’s nature] can be surmounted, but if they are ingrained in the formation of the present being, it can only be done by calling in a higher power and consciousness than that of the personal mind and will. The higher consciousness
can by what it brings correct or rebuild what is defective in the personal nature.

* 

The consciousness is always there above you. It is when one opens oneself and calls it that it descends and works — whether in meditation or in work.

* 

What comes from above can come when one is in a clear mind or when the vital is disturbed, when one is meditating or when one is moving about, when one is working or when one is doing nothing. Most often it comes when one is in a clear concentrated state, but it may not,—there is no absolute rule. Moreover the pull or call may produce no immediate effect and yet there may be an effect when one is no longer actually pulling or calling. All these mental reasons alleged for its coming or going are too rigid — sometimes they apply, very often they don’t apply. One has to have faith, confidence, aspiration but one cannot bind down the Force as to when, how and why it will act.

* 

It [the higher consciousness] descends in the atmosphere, but for it to be effective the individual must receive and respond. It descends also in the individual independently of the atmosphere.

Preparatory Experiences and Descent

The illumination above the head as usually seen in this Yoga is the Light of the Divine Truth. It is above the head that there is perpetually the Divine Peace, Force, Light, Knowledge, Ananda. These begin to descend into the body when the personal consciousness is prepared sufficiently. The preparation is usually full of vicissitudes such as these [illness, sleeplessness, an inability to concentrate] but one has to persist patiently, opening oneself more and more till that is ready.

*
Why should it \(a\ sense\ of\ purity\ in\ the\ being\) be an imagination? When the higher consciousness touches it creates so long as it is there an essential purity in which all parts of the being can share. Or, even if the exterior being does not share actively in it, it may fall quiescent so that there is nothing to interfere with the whole inner being realising the truth of a certain experience. The state does not last because it is only a preparatory touch, not the full or permanent descent; but while it is there it is real. The sex-sensation is of course the thing in the external being, the perversion or false representation in nature, that is the chief obstacle to the experience becoming frequent and then normal. It usually happens that such an opposite tries to assert itself after an experience.

* 

The experiences you have had from above are spiritual experiences. The experience has come, but not yet taken possession of the centres— it is touching them so as to prepare. The Truth consciousness is the consciousness which lives in the Truth or in constant touch with it and not, as the ordinary mind does, in the Ignorance.

* 

The experiences you have are a good starting-point for realisation. They have to develop into the light of a deeper state in which there will be the descent of a higher Consciousness into you. Your present consciousness in which you feel these things is only a preparatory one— in which the Mother works in you through the cosmic power according to your state of consciousness and your karma and in that working both success and failure can come— one has to remain equal-minded to both while trying always for success. A surer guidance can come even in this preparatory consciousness if you are entirely turned towards her alone in such a way that you can feel her direct guidance and follow it without any other influence or force intervening to act upon you, but that condition is not easy to get or keep— it needs a great one-pointedness and constant
single-minded dedication. When the higher consciousness will descend, then a closer union, a more intimate consciousness of the Presence and a more illumined intuition will become possible.

* 

It is good. The more you keep that dominant sense of the force and the calmness and increase it, the more the other feeling [of inadequacy and restlessness] will diminish and fade. It always happens that at first the Power and Peace only press, touch, invade at places, until a time comes when a part of the being always feels in that condition however much disturbance may assail the surface. Afterwards the disturbance is more and more pushed out till it is felt only outside the being, not in it. When that too goes, there is the complete peace and the full foundation.

* 

Your letter of today makes it very clear what is happening. The Force that you felt had come down at first, came to open the way for the descent of the higher consciousness into the mind and body. That was why it descended with such force and the difficulty of holding or assimilating it was simply because the body was unaccustomed. But as often happens the Force is preparing its own reception and habituating the body to the descent. Having done that sufficiently it is coming down as a massive peace. The higher consciousness in its descent takes several fundamental forms — peace, power and strength, light, knowledge, Ananda. Usually it is the peace that descends first. This is not a mental, vital or physical peace of the ordinary kind, but something from above (spiritual), very firm, solid and concrete. It is its concreteness that makes you feel like a still massive block — a mass of the higher consciousness in place of the more tenuous substance of the ordinary nature. As for its being worth having, you can see that it is — it is indeed the beginning of the real transformation — all the rest hitherto has been mainly preparation and clearing of difficulties and impediments through all these years. This serene peace and massive stillness
has to stabilise itself, fill the whole nature, widen itself until all existence internal and external seems full of it. This may take time, but the beginning once there it is sure to take place, if one is steady and constant. It becomes besides the sure base on which all the rest, — power and strength, light and knowledge, Ananda and divine love, can come in and securely fill the consciousness.

The usual mental means to widen the consciousness is to think of and feel oneself as spreading out into space beyond the body — as a corrective to the thought and feeling of oneself as identified with the body and shut up in it. After a time this leads to a substantial experience of wide consciousness beyond the body. The means to quieten the physical consciousness is to detach oneself from all restless vibrations, not by any struggle or effort but by a simple easy will of quietude. However now that the higher Force is bringing quietude, these mental means may not be necessary — for the peace from above usually brings the wideness of the self — though for some it brings it at once, for others it takes time.

Anyhow, the spiritual opening has been clearly made in you; the rest is a matter of development and time.

The Order of Descent into the Being

It [the higher consciousness] enters usually first into the mind, then into the vital and then into the body, because it is these that have to be changed and that is the natural order.

Whatever comes from above the head, whether it is Presence, Peace, Ananda, or anything else, normally descends into the head first, then after occupying all the mental centres it comes down into the heart and from there goes down into the vital centres and occupies the whole body. If there is a resistance, it is felt as a weight and a pressure — when the way is open, the pressure disappears and there is only the thing itself. It enters each centre as soon as the way to it is open.
The Force usually comes down through the head and afterwards descends lower in the body to the heart, afterwards through the navel downwards.

The sadhak becomes restless under the Force only if he resists it — otherwise it brings peace and calm and happiness and strength.

It is probably some other part of the mind — the vital mind or physical mind — it is these usually that resist.

Usually the descent in the head helps to quiet the mind.

If you mean the descent of the higher consciousness, that is felt in the heart region, not only in the centre, just as it is felt in the head. The touching of the head is only a first pressure. Afterwards there is a feeling of a mass of peace, force, light, Ananda or consciousness coming down in the head directly and descending further to the chest and so to the navel and through the body. For some it takes weeks or months, in others it descends rapidly.

Yes, it was the same experience [as an earlier one]. You went inside under the pressure of the Force — which is often though not always the first result — went into a few seconds’ samadhi according to the ordinary language. The Force when it descends tries to open the body and pass through the centres. It has to come in (ordinarily) through the crown of the head (Brahmarandhra) and pass through the inner mind centre which is in the middle of the forehead between the eyebrows. That is why it presses first on the head. The opening of the eyes brings one back to the ordinary consciousness of the outer world, that is why the intensity is relieved by opening the eyes.

When things come in this order the head opens up first and the heart afterwards — finally all the centres. So what is there
to be concerned about? If you are satisfied only with peace, knowledge and mukti, then perhaps the heart centre may open to that only. But if you want the love, then the descending Power and Light will work for that also. So cheer up and don’t get into a state of pother with imaginary difficulties.

* 

The descent into the body first in the head, then down to the neck and in the chest is the ordinary rule. For many there is a big stop before it gets below the navel owing to some vital resistance. Once it passes that barricade it does not usually take long to come down farther. But there is no rule as to the time taken. In some it comes down like a flood, in others it goes through with a methodical and deliberate increase. I don’t think the peace descent is in the habit of waiting for companions — more often it likes at first to be all by itself and then call down its friends with the message, “Come along, I have made the place all ready for you.”

* 

It is possible that there may have been too much haste in this attempt to open the navel and the lower centre. In this Yoga the movement is downward — first the two head centres, then the heart, then the navel and then the two others. If the higher experience is first fully established with its higher consciousness, knowledge and will in the three upper centres, then it is easier to open the three lower ones without too much disturbance.

The Effect of Descent into the Lower Planes

When a higher force comes down into a lower plane, it is diminished and modified by the inferior substance, lesser power and more mixed movements of that lower plane. Thus, if the Overmind Power works through the illumined mind, only part

1 The correspondent was concerned that he might receive knowledge but not love since his head centre seemed to be opening before his heart centre. — Ed.
of its truth and force can manifest and be effective — so much only as can get through this less receptive consciousness. And even what gets through is less true, mixed with other matter, less overmental, more easily modified into something that is part truth, part error. When this diminished indirect Force descends farther down into the mind and vital, it has still something of the Overmind creative Truth in it, but gets very badly mixed with mental and vital formations that disfigure it and make it half effective only, sometimes ineffective.

* 

(1) Part of it [the descending higher consciousness] is stored up in the frontal consciousness and remains there.  
(2) Part of it goes behind and remains as a support to the active part of the being.  
(3) Part flows out into the universal Nature.  
(4) Part is absorbed by the Inconscient and lost to the individual conscious action.