Chapter Three

The Emergence or Coming Forward of the Psychic

The Meaning of “Coming to the Front”

What is meant by [the psychic’s] coming to the front is simply this. The psychic ordinarily is deep within. Very few people are aware of their souls — when they speak of their soul, they usually mean the vital + mental being or else the (false) soul of desire. The psychic remains behind and acts only through the mind, vital and physical wherever it can. For this reason the psychic being except where it is very much developed has only a small and partial, concealed and mixed or diluted influence on the life of most men. By coming forward is meant that it comes from behind the veil, its presence is felt clearly in the waking daily consciousness, its influence fills, dominates, transforms the mind and vital and their movements, even the physical. One is aware of one’s soul, feels the psychic to be one’s true being, the mind and the rest begin to be only instruments of the inmost within us.

The inner mental, vital, physical are also veiled, but much nearer to the surface and much of their movements or inspirations get through the veil (but not in any fullness or purity) in the lives of developed human beings, something even in the lives of ordinary people. But these too in Yoga throw down the veil after a time and come in front and their action predominates in the consciousness while the external is no longer felt as one’s own self but only as a front or even a fringe of the being.

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Awakening [of the psychic being] is a different thing [from its coming to the front], it means the conscious action of the psychic from behind. When it comes to the front it invades the mind
and vital and body and psychises their movements. It comes best by aspiration and an unquestioning and entire turning and surrender to the Mother. But also it sometimes comes of itself when the Adhar is ready.

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That is what we speak of as the psychic being coming in front — to psychise the whole consciousness, i.e. make it subject to the psychic truth and full of the psychic nature. At the same time the ordinary vital being has to disappear and be changed into the true vital.

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The soul in itself contains all possible strength, but most of it is held behind the veil and it is what comes forward in the nature that makes the difference. In some people the psychic element is strong and in others weak; in some people the mind is the strongest part and governs, in others the vital is the strongest part and leads or drives. But by sadhana the psychic being can be more and more brought forward till it is dominant and governs the rest. If it were already governing, then the struggles and difficulties of the mind and vital would not at all be serious; for each man in the light of the psychic would see and feel the truth and more and more follow it.

**Signs of the Psychic’s Coming Forward**

It is the psychic being in you that has come forward — and when the psychic being comes forward all is happiness, the right attitude, the right vision of things. Of course in one sense it is the same I that puts forward different parts of itself. But when these different parts are all under the control of the psychic and turned by it towards the reception of the higher consciousness, then there begins the harmonisation of all the parts and their progressive recasting into moulds of the higher consciousness growing in peace, light, force, love, knowledge, Ananda which is what we call the transformation.

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The psychic being in you is open always to the Divine Power, and when it comes in front, your spiritual capacity awakens and you are fully within the protection and can be moved by the Mother’s force. The other parts are divided and can be carried away by the wrong movements of the ordinary nature. Especially if you trust your physical mind and mistake its ideas and suggestions for the true inspiration, you are liable to fall into serious errors both in your attitude and your choice of action and may lose the results of the protection and of the Force. Aspire to live always in your psychic being and to be open to the Mother; let the psychic part in you dominate the instruments, mind, life and body. Then the habit of the true intuition and the true impulse to action will come and you will be able to live in conscious communion, to feel her presence and be moved only by her Force. This is your true way in the Yoga.

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A central love, bhakti, surrender, giving everything, a sight within that sees always clearly what is spiritually right or wrong and automatically rejects the latter — a movement of entire consecration and dedication of all in one to the Mother [are the signs of the psychic’s coming forward].

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It is your psychic being which came in front, probably, or else it is the true vital being in you which was able to come in front because you took the psychic attitude. When the psychic being comes in front, then there is an automatic perception of the true and untrue, the divine and the undivine, the spiritual right and wrong of things and the false vital and mental movements and attacks are immediately exposed and fall away and can do nothing; gradually the vital and physical as well as the mind get full of this psychic light and truth and sound feeling and purity and such violent attacks as you have are impossible. When the true vital being comes forward, it is something wide and strong and calm, an unmoved and powerful warrior for the Divine and the Truth repelling all enemies, bringing in a true strength and
force and opening the vital to the greater Consciousness above. It has to be seen which of the two it is you feel within you.

That is good. It means that the psychic has come up again. When the psychic is in the front, the sadhana becomes natural and easy and it is only a question of time and natural development. When the mind or the vital or the physical consciousness is on the top, then the sadhana is a tapasya and a struggle.

Excuse me,—if it [the soul] goes on with its karma, then it does not get liberation. If it wants only farther experience, it can just stay there in the ordinary nature. The aim of Yoga is to transcend karma. Karma means subjection to lower Nature; through Yoga the soul goes towards freedom.

You are describing the action of the ordinary existence, not the Yoga. Yoga is a seeking (not a mental searching), it is not experimenting in contraries and contradictories. It is the mind that does that and the mind that analyses. The soul does not search, analyse, experiment—it seeks, feels, experiences.

The only grain of truth is that the Yoga is very usually a series of ups and downs till you get to a certain height. But there is a quite different reason for that—not the vagaries of the soul. On the contrary when the psychic being gets in front and becomes master, there comes in a fundamentally smooth action and although there are difficulties and undulations of movement, these are no longer of an abrupt or dramatic character.

It is very good; all you write is a strong sign of the psychic emergence of which I spoke in yesterday’s letter. There is at once the deep plunge into the psychic and the emergence of the psychic influence in mind and heart. The depth of the plunge is the reason why action has become so slow, because the consciousness is too much inside to act swiftly on outside things. This is a stage which one passes through in the process of the
inner change. At the same time the ideas in the mind and the perceptions and the mental and vital attitude towards things and happenings and people are becoming more and more of a psychic character. Love and devotion to the Divine is the central feeling of the psychic nature and that is growing in you towards the Mother, pervading your being. A psychic love towards all is also emerging; this love is a thing inward and does not seek to express itself outwardly like the vital love which men usually have. The psychic and spiritual attitude is also not dependent on the good and bad in beings, but is self-existent regarding them as souls who carry the Divine in them however thickly concealed and are children of the Mother.

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Once the condition has come in which the thoughts that cross are not believed, accepted or allowed to govern the conduct, it must be understood that the vital mind is no longer dominant — for the nature of the vital mind is always to cloud the true mind's perception and drive it towards action. Neither the vital mind nor the physical mind are things that have to be got rid of, but they must be quietened, purified, controlled and transformed. That will take place fully when the thinking mind becomes fully conscious and when the psychic comes forward and leads and governs both it and the vital and physical being. Your thinking mind is becoming more and more conscious; that is shown by what you write, for the perceptions there expressed are quite clear-seeing and correct and show an increasingly right understanding. Moreover what is making you conscious is the increasing pressure of the psychic behind to come forward. For what you felt as trying to come out from behind was the psychic itself. The feeling of flowers and fragrance and a coolness and peace are always sure signs that the psychic is becoming active. It has been developing in you for some time past, only it was covered over by rushes of the old vital mind which did not want to lose its hold or its place. Now that the vital mind is quiet, it is again the psychic that is pressing to come forward and establish its influence.
The thoughts that came afterwards about the defects of your action towards others, repentance and the reasons why you could not establish proper relations with others were the result of this psychic emergence. For when the psychic comes forward or when it strongly influences mind or vital, then one begins to see clearly and rightly about one's own nature and action and about things and about others and to have the right feelings. It was under this pressure of the psychic also that while the mind got these right thoughts and perceptions, the vital felt repentance for what had been done and wished to ask forgiveness. But while this readiness to ask forgiveness was in itself a right feeling, to do so physically would not have been quite the wisest or best action. So the psychic itself at once told you what was the true thing to do, to ask forgiveness instead from the Mother. What was necessary having been done in the mind and vital, the psychic then cleared the whole consciousness and brought back its own quiet and peace. I explain all that to you so that you may begin to understand how these things work within and what is meant by the psychic and its action and influence.

The vision you had of the other luminous and peaceful and beautiful world was a sort of symbolic image of the true physical consciousness and the world in which it lives, the physical consciousness as it is when it is directly under the control of the psychic, and the character of the world which it tends to create for itself.

The Psychic and the Relation with the Divine

The psychic knows that the Divine is and affirms its knowledge against all appearances.

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The direct relation with the Divine can only grow from within — it is there in the soul and it has to come out by sadhana — that is indeed the reason for doing sadhana. The natural mind of man follows its own ideas, the vital clings to its own desires, the physical follows its own habits — these divide from the Divine.
It is only when the psychic being grows and comes forward and
governs the mind and vital and physical and changes them that
this veil of personal ideas, desires and habits can fall — then the
direct relation and nearness grows in the being till the whole
consciousness is united with the Divine. When you go deep into
the psychic, then you begin to feel the Mother near — when the
mind or vital is under the influence of the psychic this sense
grows in them also. That is the way in which it must come.

The realisation of the psychic being, its awakening and the
bringing of it in front depend mainly on the extent to which
one can develop a personal relation with the Divine, a relation
of bhakti, love, reliance, self-giving, rejection of the insistences
of the separating and self-asserting mental, vital and physical
ego.

It may be either way [that the psychic comes to the front —
before the realisation of the Divine or after it]. There is a touch
and the realisation comes and the psychic takes its proper place
as the result; or the psychic may come to the front and prepare
the nature for the realisation.

Means of Bringing Forward the Psychic

Aspiration constant and sincere and the will to turn to the Divine
alone are the best means of bringing forward the psychic being.

There is no approved method of bringing forward the psychic
being. It depends on the aspiration, the growth of faith and
devotion, the diminution of the hold of the mental and vital ego
and their movements — at a certain point in this development
the screen between the psychic and the rest of the nature thins
and begins to break, the psychic becomes more and more visible
and active and finally takes over charge. Sometimes it may come
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suddenly, but there is no rule for that.

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There is no process for it [getting the psychic in front]. It comes like the other things — you have to aspire for it and it can only happen when you are sufficiently advanced.

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It [the psychic] comes forward of itself either through constant love and aspiration or when the mind and vital have been made ready by the descent from above and the working of the Force.

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It [the dynamic descent from above into the heart] can help the psychic to come forward, but it does not always do so automatically — it at least creates better conditions for the psychic.

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To bring the psychic forward, selfishness and demand (which is the base of the vital feelings) must be got rid of — or at least never accepted.

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Nothing done in the past or present can prevent the psychic from coming forward if there is the true will to get rid of these things and live in the psychic and spiritual consciousness.

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If there is the will to surrender in the central being, then the psychic can come forward.

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There is absolutely no reason why you should return when you have come with the intention of staying here for a sufficient time and it is better to keep to your intention.

It is not necessary to make an effort to bring your psychic being to the front; all that is necessary is a steady and quiet
aspiration; if that is there always, all that is necessary to prepare for the result will be done by degrees and the psychic being will come fully to the front when all is ready and it is time. It happens usually that much in the mental, vital and physical has to be prepared before it can happen. This preparation cannot fail to be hastened by your stay here.

Bhakti and love are part of the psychic movement, a large part of it; in aspiring for the psychic change, you are aspiring for bhakti and love. But it is not useful to restrict your aspiration by a single movement like that of the Vaishnava sadhana; for this Yoga is more ample and contains, but is not confined to, what is essential in the Vaishnava sadhana. Whether you visit the physical Brindavan or not does not matter; what is necessary is to find the inner union through love and bhakti.

As for weeping, there is nothing against the tears that come from the inner aspiration; it is only when it is vital, outward, too much on the surface that it becomes a movement of disturbance and emotional disorder. Intensity of prayer is not at all to be rejected; it is one of the most powerful means of the sadhana.

As for the obstacle to meditation or experience, it would usually be when some part of the being is dealt with which has still to be prepared and to open. Such periods always occur in sadhana and one has to meet these with a patient and persistent aspiration and a quiet vigilance of self-introspection that will bring about the necessary opening. It should not awaken depression or lead to any relaxation of will and the effort of sadhana. Open yourself more and more, that is all that is needed.

Obstacles to the Psychic’s Emergence

You have been keeping the psychic in the background during a thousand lives and indulging the vital. That is why the psychic is not strong.

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The mind and the vital have always been dominant and developed themselves and are accustomed to act for themselves. How
do you expect an influence [of the psychic] coming forward for the first time to be stronger than they are?

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Of course the ego and the vital with its claims and desires is always the main obstacle to the emergence of the psychic. For they make one live, act, do sadhana even for one’s own sake and psychicisation means to live, act and do sadhana for the sake of the Divine.

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The psychic being emerges slowly in most men, even after taking up sadhana. There is so much in the mind and vital that has to change and readjust itself before the psychic can be entirely free. One has to wait till the necessary process has gone far enough before it can burst its agelong veil and come in front to control the nature. It is true that nothing can give so much inner happiness and joy — though peace can come by the mental and vital liberation or through the growth of a strong samata in the being.

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It is the action of the psychic being, not the being itself, that gets mixed with the mental, vital and physical distortions because it has to use them to express what little of the true psychic feeling gets through the veil. It is by the heart’s aspiration to the Divine that the psychic being gets free from these disabilities.

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Even when the psychic is in front, there may be and are likely to be mental and vital difficulties — only then, there is also the right psychic power and perception behind to deal with them.

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It [the flow of love and joy from the heart centre] can be misused on a large scale only if there is a strong and vehement vital ego not accustomed to correction or else a vital full of the kāmavāsanā. On a small scale it can be misused by the small
selfishnesses, vanities, ambitions, demands of the lower vital
supporting themselves upon it. If you are on guard against these
things then there is no danger of misuse. If the psychic puts forth
psychic discernment along with the love, then there is no danger,
for the light of psychic discernment at once refuses all mixture
or misuse.

* That is of course the difficulty, even when one sees what is to
be done and wishes to do it. One forgets at the moment when
the control is needed. The habit of remembering and applying
one’s knowledge at the right moment comes only by a great
patience and perseverance which refuses to be discouraged by
frequent failure. Only if the psychic being is in front, then it
reminds the mind and the thing can be more quickly done. It
was your physical ill-health combined with the difficulty of the
physical consciousness (which is always a thing of habits and
repeats and clings to the old habits even when the mind wants
to get rid of them) that prevented the emergence of the psychic
from completing itself. With the disappearance of ill-health the
difficulty may be more successfully tackled and achieved. As for
the long period of seven years without the spiritual success there
is nothing unusual in that — the old Yogins used to say that one
must be ready for 12 years of preparation before the old nature
will be sufficiently modified to allow of the spiritual opening.
That is of course not inevitable; it can be done more briefly;
but still it takes usually a long time — it has done so with most
in the Asram. But in your case the first opening did come, it is
only temporarily and not altogether closed, awaiting a second
opening which should free the nature for the external as well as
the inner change.

* It [the psychic] may and does retire from the front or gets clouded
over, but once it has been in front it is never relegated back
behind the veil altogether and it can always return to the front
with comparative ease.
The conversion which keeps the consciousness turned towards the light and makes the right attitude spontaneous and natural and abiding and rejection also spontaneous is the psychic conversion. That is to say, man usually lives in his vital and the body is its instrument and the mind its counsellor and minister (except for the few mental men who live mostly for the things of the mind, but even they are in subjection to the vital in their ordinary movements). The spiritual conversion begins when the soul begins to insist on a deeper life and is complete when the psychic becomes the basis or the leader of the consciousness and mind and vital and body are led by it and obey it. Of course if that once happens fully, doubt, depression and despair cannot come any longer, although there may be and are difficulties still. If it is not fully, but still fundamentally accomplished, even then these things either do not come or are brief passing clouds on the surface — for there is a rock of support and certitude at the base, which even if partially covered cannot disappear altogether.

Mostly however the constant recurrence of depression and despair or of doubt and revolt is due to a mental or vital formation which takes hold of the vital mind and makes it run round always in the same circle at the slightest provoking cause or even without cause. It is like an illness to which the body consents from habit and from belief in the illness even though it suffers from it, and once started the illness runs its habitual course unless it is cut short by some strong counteracting force. If once the body can withdraw its consent, the illness immediately or quickly ceases — that was the secret of the Coué system. So too if the vital mind withdraws its consent, refuses to be dominated by the habitual suggestions and the habitual movements, these recurrences of depression and despair can be made soon to cease. But it is not easy for this mind, once it has got into the habit of consent, even a quite passive and suffering and reluctant consent, to cancel the habit and get rid of the black circle. It can be done easily only when the mind refuses any longer to believe in the suggestions or accept the ideas or feelings that start the circle.

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The facts or arguments you put forward to support your diffidence or depression cannot stand in the light of the Yoga experience of others—if they were enough to justify discouragement, how many would have had to turn back from the way who are now far on towards the goal? I cannot now deal with them in detail, but they do not, any of them, justify your inference [of unfitness for Yoga].

Also, your psychic being does not deserve the censure you have bestowed upon it. What prevents it from coming out in its full power is the crust of past habits, formations, active vibrations of the mind-stuff and vital stuff which come from a mind and life which have been more creative and outgoing and expansive than indrawn and introspective. In many who are like this—active men and intellectuals—the first stage of Yoga is long and difficult with slow development and sparse experiences, most of the work being done in the subliminal behind the veil—until things are ready.

When the time comes for the definite opening and removal of the purdah between the inner and the outer man, I think I can promise you that you will find your power of Yoga and Yogic experience at least as unexpectedly complete as you, and others, have found your power for poetry—though necessarily its working out will take time, because it is not a detail but the whole life and the whole nature in which there must be the divine victory.