

## Chapter Three

# Morality and Yoga

### The Spiritual Life and the Ordinary Life

The spiritual life (*adhyātma jīvana*), the religious life (*dharma jīvana*) and the ordinary human life of which morality is a part are three quite different things and one must know which one desires and not confuse the three together. The ordinary life is that of the average human consciousness separated from its own true self and from the Divine and led by the common habits of the mind, life and body which are the laws of the Ignorance. The religious life is a movement of the same ignorant human consciousness, turning or trying to turn away from the earth towards the Divine but as yet without knowledge and led by the dogmatic tenets and rules of some sect or creed which claims to have found the way out of the bonds of the earth-consciousness into some beatific Beyond. The religious life may be the first approach to the spiritual, but very often it is only a turning about in a round of rites, ceremonies and practices or set ideas and forms without any issue. The spiritual life, on the contrary, proceeds directly by a change of consciousness, a change from the ordinary consciousness, ignorant and separated from its true self and from God, to a greater consciousness in which one finds one's true being and comes first into direct and living contact and then into union with the Divine. For the spiritual seeker this change of consciousness is the one thing he seeks and nothing else matters.

Morality is a part of the ordinary life; it is an attempt to govern the outward conduct by certain mental rules or to form the character by these rules in the image of a certain mental ideal. The spiritual life goes beyond the mind; it enters into the deeper consciousness of the Spirit and acts out of the truth of the Spirit. As for the question about the ethical life and the need to realise God, it depends on what is meant by fulfilment of the

objects of life. If an entry into the spiritual consciousness is part of it, then mere morality will not give it to you.

Politics as such has nothing to do with the spiritual life. If the spiritual man does anything for his country, it is in order to do the will of the Divine and as part of a divinely appointed work and not from any other common human motive. In none of his acts does he proceed from the common mental and vital motives which move ordinary men but acts out of the truth of the Spirit and from an inner command of which he knows the source.

The kind of worship (*pūjā*) spoken of in the letter belongs to the religious life. It can, if rightly done in the deepest religious spirit, prepare the mind and heart to some extent but no more. But if worship is done as part of meditation or with a true aspiration to the spiritual reality and the spiritual consciousness and with the yearning for contact and union with the Divine, then it can be spiritually effective.

If you have a sincere aspiration to the spiritual change in your heart and soul, then you will find the way and the Guide. A mere mental seeking and questioning are not enough to open the doors of the Spirit.

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In the ordinary life, people accept the vital movements, anger, desire, greed, sex etc. as natural, allowable and legitimate things, part of the human nature. Only so far as society discourages them or wishes to keep them within fixed limits or subject to a decent restraint or measure, people try to control them so as to conform to the social standard of morality or rule of conduct. Here on the contrary as in all spiritual life, the conquest and complete mastery of these things is demanded. That is why the struggle is more felt, not because these things rise more strongly in sadhaks than in ordinary men, but because of the intensity of the struggle between the spiritual mind which demands control and the vital movements which rebel and wish to continue in the new as they did in the old life. As for the idea that the sadhana raises up things of the kind, the only truth in that is this that,

first, there are many things in the ordinary man of which he is not conscious because the vital hides them from the mind and gratifies them without the mind realising what is the force that is moving the action — thus things that are done under the plea of altruism, philanthropy, service etc. are largely moved by ego which hides itself behind these justifications; in Yoga the secret motive has to be pulled out from behind the veil, exposed and got rid of. Secondly, some things are suppressed in the ordinary life and remain lying in the nature, suppressed but not eliminated; they may rise up any day or they may express themselves in nervous forms or other disorders of the mind or vital or body without it being evident what is their real cause. This has been recently discovered by European psychologists and much emphasised, even exaggerated in a new science called psychoanalysis. Here again in sadhana one has to become conscious of these suppressed impulses and eliminate them — this may be called raising up, but that does not mean that they have to be raised up into action but only raised up before the consciousness so as to be cleared out of the being.

As for some men being able to control themselves and others being swept away, that is due to difference of temperament. Some men are sattwic and control comes easy to them, up to a certain point at least; others are more rajasic and find control difficult and often impossible. Some have a strong mind and mental will and others are vital men in whom the vital passions are stronger or more on the surface. Some do not think control necessary and let themselves go. In sadhana the mental or moral control has to be replaced by the spiritual mastery — for the mental control is only partial and it controls but does not liberate; it is only the psychic and spiritual that can do that. That is the main difference in this respect between the ordinary and the spiritual life.

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Everything depends upon the aim you put before you. If for the realisation of one's spiritual aim it is necessary to give up the ordinary life of the Ignorance (*samsāra*), it must be done; the

claim of the ordinary life cannot stand against that of the spirit.

If a Yoga of works alone is chosen as the path, then one may remain in the *samsāra*, but it will be freely, as a field of action and not from any sense of obligation; for the Yogin must be free inwardly from all ties and attachments. On the other hand there is no necessity to live the family life — one can leave it and take any kind of works as a field of action.

In the Yoga practised here the aim is to rise to a higher consciousness and to live out of the higher consciousness alone, not with the ordinary motives. This means a change of life as well as a change of consciousness. But all are not so circumstanced that they can cut loose from the ordinary life; they accept it therefore as a field of experience and self-training in the earlier stages of the sadhana. But they must take care to look at it as a field of experience only and to get free from the ordinary desires, attachments and ideas which usually go with it; otherwise it becomes a drag and hindrance on their sadhana. When one is not compelled by circumstances there is no necessity to continue the ordinary life.

One becomes tamasic by leaving the ordinary actions and life only if the vital is so accustomed to draw its motives of energy from the ordinary consciousness and its desires and activities that if it loses them, it loses all joy and charm and energy of existence. But if one has a spiritual aim and an inner life and the vital part accepts them, then it draws its energies from within and there is no danger of one's being tamasic.

### Morality

The principle of life which I seek to establish is spiritual. Morality is a question of man's mind and vital, it belongs to a lower plane of consciousness. A spiritual life therefore cannot be founded on a moral basis, it must be founded on a spiritual basis. This does not mean that the spiritual man must be immoral — as if there were no other law of conduct than the moral. The law of action of the spiritual consciousness is higher, not lower than the moral — it is founded on union with

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the Divine and living in the Divine Consciousness and its action is founded on obedience to the Divine Will.

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The beliefs you speak of with regard to right and wrong, beauty and ugliness etc. are necessary for the human being and for the guidance of his life. He cannot do without the distinctions they involve. But in a higher consciousness when he enters into the Light or is touched by it, these distinctions disappear, for he is then approaching the eternal and infinite good and right which he reaches perfectly when he is able to enter into the Truth Consciousness or Supermind. The belief in the guidance of God is also justified by spiritual experience and is very necessary for the sadhana; this also rises to its highest and completest truth when one enters into the Light.

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It [*the reason people remain calm and self-controlled in ordinary life*] is social pressure accompanied by a certain habit of mental control born of the social pressure. It is not from peace at all. Remove the social pressure even partly and as in England and America recently people let themselves go and do according to the vital impulses instead of controlling them — except of course those who stick to the religious and moral ideas of the past even when society drifts away from these ideas.

### Vice and Virtue

Vice and virtue have nothing to do with darkness or light, truth and falsehood. The spiritual man rises above vice and virtue, he does not rise above truth and light, unless you mean by truth and light, human truth and mental light. They have to be transcended, just as virtue and vice have to be transcended.

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Are you in a position to make a judgment as to what will or will not help God's work? You seem to have very elementary

ideas in these matters. What is your idea of divinisation, — to be a virtuous man, a good husband, son, father, a good citizen etc.? In that case I myself am most undivine, — for I have never been these things. Men like X or Y would then be the great Transformed Divine Men.

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Many sinners are people who are preparing to turn to the Divine and many virtuous people have a long run of lives yet to go through before they will think of it.

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Vices are simply an overflow of energy in unregulated channels.

### The Sattwic Man and the Spiritual Man

The passage through sattwa is the ordinary idea of Yoga, it is the preparation and purification by the yama-niyama of Patanjali or by other means in other Yogas, e.g., saintliness in the bhakti schools, the eightfold path in Buddhism etc., etc. In our Yoga the evolution through sattwa is replaced by the cultivation of equanimity, *samatā*, and by the psychic transformation.

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It is a very beautiful character that you describe in your letter, a perfect type of the sattwic man, a fine and harmonised ethical nature supported and vivified by a fine and developed psychic being. But still, although it may be regarded as an excellent preparation for the spiritual life, it cannot by itself be called spirituality — unless indeed we reduce the meaning of the word to the connotation ordinarily given to it in the West where mental ideation, ethical striving, a flowering of fine character, altruism, self-sacrifice, self-denial, philanthropy, service to men or mankind are considered the height of spiritual aspiration or spiritual attainment. Obviously if that is to be the last word of earthly achievement, there is no need for anything farther; the close and vivid discovery of soul or self, the straining towards

that which is behind life and above mind, the passion for the Eternal or the Infinite, the hunger for a freedom and wideness of consciousness and existence not limited by the narrow moulds of intellect, character and the past life-aims of humanity, the thirst for union with the Divine or for the pure bliss and beauty of spiritual existence not tied down to mental and vital values must be dismissed as a superfluous dream for which there is neither place nor necessity here. Yet these things have been not only dreamed of and hungered after but reached and tasted by beings born in a mortal and human body. Spirituality lies there; its essence consists in a bursting of the human mental, moral, aesthetic, vital moulds in order to reach beyond them and enter into a consciousness of which these things are the very stuff, to which these experiences are native. Anything less than that, than a striving after it or at least a partial realisation of it is not spirituality. The spiritual man is one who has realised something of it even if only in one aspect out of many; one who is striving after it is the spiritual seeker. All else however magnificently intellectual, ethical, aesthetically beautiful and harmonious, vitally splendid, great and forceful or physically perfect is a valuable achievement on the way, but not yet that, for one has not passed the Rubicon of mind into a new empire.

Owing to the nature of the past evolution of consciousness and of spirituality itself, there has been much confusion on this point and there is still more today because of the present domination of the Western ideal. On one side or another mental idealism, ethical development, altruistic character and action, religious piety and fervour, occult powers, feats of ascetic endurance have been put forward as the essence of spirituality or the test or proof of achievement or the signposts of the journey to spiritual perfection. It is ignored that any of these things may be there and yet there need not be any spiritual life behind it, any rebirth into a new consciousness or any remoulding of either the inner or the outer consciousness no longer in a higher or richer power of mind and life and body only, the instruments, but in the direct light and force of the hitherto veiled user of the instrument, the now revealed and directly active soul, self, spirit or of the

Divine or Eternal whose representatives or aspects they are.

This confusion meets us at every point and in all sorts of forms whose common error is to ignore the essence and core of the matter. The Western intellect presents us with the strivings of the mind, life, emotions, passions, moral will and tells us these are the real spiritual things, man's highest aim and endeavour and all else is vain mysticism, asceticism, evasion of life. It appears that the lined and ravaged face of a Greek bust of Homer is a thousand times more spiritual than the empty calm or the ecstatic smile of the Buddha! We are told by others that to care for the family and carry out our social and domestic duties, to be a good man, a perfect citizen, patriot, worker for the community, to serve mankind are the real things far more spiritual than to sit in idle meditation seeking for some remote and invisible transcendental Reality — or unreality. Philanthropy, altruism, service, selfless labour for humankind, these are the spiritual summits. True selflessness lies there, to sacrifice or offer one's life to the good of others, to the community, to the race. To seek one's own inner spiritual growth, to draw back from ordinary life in order to reach something beyond, to search after the Divine above humanity is mere egoism, not true spirituality, but an aberration, a misdirection of the will and life.

All that might be admirable and true — as certainly all the things thus eulogised have their place in the human evolution, if the premiss on which it were founded were true — that the seeking for something behind, something beyond, something of which the evolution of mind, life and body was only a veil or a preparation is an illusion and a chimaera. But if these things are real, if the seeking is a lasting and major drive in Nature, then all these objections and recommendations are futile. For this drive will fulfil itself, this hidden reality will draw and draw us till we achieve it. Those who feel its call, cannot do otherwise than follow and strive, even if need be leave all else for it, hold all other greatness, splendour, nobility, beauty as cheaper minor things compared with this other Light and Greatness and Beauty of which they have had the vision, the intimation, the formless attraction or else the passing touch or glimpse. Ever since Mind

itself reached a certain development, there has been at first dimly and gropingly, then more and more clearly and intimately this drive in man towards something behind and beyond Man, towards the discovery or the expression of something hidden in his being and a world existence which is more real than his surface self even at its best, greater, fuller, truer, more divine. To arrive at that can come only by a change of consciousness, a reversal of consciousness, a new basis of consciousness which is not the lower instrumental consciousness of mind, life and body.

At each step of evolution we have this change, reversal, new base. Matter is bound in an involved consciousness which is in practice an inconscience; life in the plant in a still involved consciousness struggling for growth, expansion, persistence, seeking after movement and sensation and conscious living without yet reaching them; life in the animal in a vital consciousness possessed of these things, already emotional, possessed of a mind, but a mind still involved in life-movement, not reflective, not subjective and turning upon life to understand, master and control it. Mind is based on a consciousness that has attained this emergence, this reflective and controlling power, this growing understanding, mastery, self-awareness. But mind is still aware only of life and of itself, it is not aware of the person, the reality behind, the user of the instrument; it is seeking for these things and it is this search that constitutes the drive for a new evolution; for mind is a twilight preparing for light, an ignorance seeking after knowledge, a bondage to Nature groping after freedom and mastery over Nature. It is not on mind, on its self-modifying ignorance and bondage or even on its half-light, half-mastery, half-knowledge that the next step can base itself. It must base itself on soul consciousness, consciousness of the spirit and self — for so only can there be the full light, the spontaneous mastery, the intimate and real knowledge.

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Obviously [*in sadhana*] the rajasic movements are likely to create more trouble than the sattwic ones. The greatest difficulty of the sattwic man is the snare of virtue and self-righteousness, the

ties of philanthropy, mental idealisms, family affections etc., but except the first, these are, though difficult, still not so difficult to overpass or else transform. Sometimes however these things are as sticky as the rajasic difficulties.

### **Selfishness and Unselfishness**

Selfishness and the reaction of unselfishness of which you speak are both of them things that have to be put aside — both are obstacles or movements leading off from the true and straight path. For both these things belong to the mind and vital, they are different forms of the ego. The mind in its attempt to get away from the rajasic selfish ego tries to do just the opposite of what selfishness usually does and serve others, sacrifice itself for others, but in doing so it is only constructing another kind of egoism that prides itself on its own unselfishness and altruism and makes human service its mental ideal instead of spiritual service of the Divine. That it is a misguiding movement you saw yourself; for it wanted to sacrifice your sadhana, that is, your seeking for the Divine to this new ego of altruistic self-righteousness; it was prepared to do things without permission of the Mother or rather avoiding asking for permission. One has to get rid of selfishness and ego, not in this way, but by selfless service of the Divine and by merging the ego in the Divine Consciousness, submitting the personal will to the Divine Will, calling into the being the Divine Peace, Purity, Oneness, Knowledge, Light, Ananda, replacing the ego by the psychic being devoted and surrendered to the Divine. It is the love of the Divine that saves, not a love turned towards human beings. When the Divine Consciousness is there, then there comes based on the love of the Divine a true love and oneness for all beings. But that does not act separately from the Divine but only according to the Divine Mother's will and in her service.

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Unselfishness is not the only thing to be aimed at — by itself it would be only a moral, not a spiritual attainment.

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## Humility

A spiritual humility within is very necessary, but I do not think an outward one is very advisable (absence of pride or arrogance or vanity is indispensable of course in one's outer dealings with others) — it often creates pride, becomes formal or becomes ineffective after a time. I have seen people doing it to cure their pride, but I have not found it producing a lasting result.

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It [*to feel like doing namaskar to everyone*] is a feeling which some have who either want to cultivate humility (*X* used to do it, but I never saw that it got rid of his innate self-esteem) or who have or are trying to have the realisation of Narayan in all with a Vaishnava turn in it. To feel the One in all is right, but to bow down to the individual who lives still in his ego is good neither for him nor for the one who does it. Especially in this Yoga it tends to diffuse what should be concentrated and turned towards a higher realisation than that of the cosmic feeling which is only a step on the way.

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It is only this habit of the nature — self-worrying and harping on the sense of deficiency — that prevents you from being quiet. If you threw that out, it would be easy to be quiet. Humility is needful, but constant self-depreciation does not help; excessive self-esteem and self-depreciation are both wrong attitudes. To recognise any defects without exaggerating them is useful but, once recognised, it is no good dwelling on them always; you must have the confidence that the Divine Force can change everything and you must let the Force work.

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The view taken by the Mahatma in these matters [*of caste*] is Christian rather than Hindu — for the Christian, self-abasement, humility, the acceptance of a low status to serve humanity or the Divine are things which are highly spiritual and the noblest

privilege of the soul. This view does not admit any hierarchy of castes; the Mahatma accepts castes but on the basis that all are equal before the Divine; a Bhangi doing his dharma is as good as the Brahmin doing his, there is division of function but no hierarchy of functions. That is one view of things and the hierarchic view is another, both having a standpoint and logic of their own which the mind takes as wholly valid but which only corresponds to a part of the reality. All kinds of work are equal before the Divine and all men have the same Brahman within them, is one truth, but that development is not equal in all is another. The idea that it needs special punya to be born as a Bhangi is of course one of those forceful exaggerations of an idea which are common with the Mahatma and impress greatly the mind of his hearers. The idea behind is that his function is an indispensable service to the society, quite as much as the Brahmin's, but that being disagreeable it would need a special moral heroism to choose it voluntarily and he thinks as if the soul freely chose it as such a heroic service and as a reward of righteous acts — that is hardly likely. The service of the scavenger is indispensable under certain conditions of society, it is one of those primary necessities without which society can hardly exist and the cultural development of which the Brahmin life is part could not have taken place. But obviously the cultural development is more valuable than the service of the physical needs for the progress of humanity as opposed to its first static condition and that development can even lead to the minimising and perhaps the eventual disappearance by scientific inventions of the need for the functions of the scavenger. But that I suppose the Mahatma would not approve of as it is machinery and a departure from the simple life. In any case it is not true that the Bhangi life is superior to the Brahmin life and the reward of especial righteousness. On the other hand the traditional conception that a man is superior to others because he is born a Brahmin is not rational or justifiable. A spiritual or cultured man of Pariah birth is superior in the divine values to an unspiritual and worldly-minded or a crude and uncultured Brahmin. Birth counts, but the basic value is in the man himself, the soul behind,

and the degree to which it manifests itself in his nature.

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As for the sense of superiority, that too is a little difficult to avoid when greater horizons open before the consciousness, unless one is already of a saintly and humble disposition. There are men like Nag Mahashoy in whom spiritual experience creates more and more humility, there are others like Vivekananda in whom it erects a giant sense of strength and superiority — European critics have taxed him with it rather severely; there are others in whom it fixes a sense of superiority to men and humility to the Divine. Each position has its value. Take Vivekananda's famous answer to the Madras Pundit who objected to one of his assertions, "But Shankara does not say so." To which Vivekananda replied, "No, Shankara does not say so, but I, Vivekananda, say so", and the Pundit sank back amazed and speechless. That "I, Vivekananda" stands up to the ordinary eye like a Himalaya of self-confident egoism. But there was nothing false or unsound in Vivekananda's spiritual experience. This was not mere egoism, but the sense of what he stood for and the attitude of the fighter who, as the representative of something very great, could not allow himself to be put down or belittled. This is not to deny the necessity of non-egoism and of spiritual humility, but to show that the question is not so easy as it appears at first sight. For if I have to express my spiritual experiences, I must do it with truth — I must record them, their *bhāva*, the thoughts, feelings, extensions of consciousness which accompany them. What can I do with the experience in which one feels the whole world in oneself or the force of the Divine flowing in one's being and nature or the certitude of one's faith against all doubts and doubters or one's oneness with the Divine or the smallness of human thought and life compared with this greater knowledge and existence? And I have to use the word "I" — I cannot take refuge in saying "this body" or "this appearance", — especially as I am not a Mayavadin. Shall I not inevitably fall into expressions which will make X shake his head at my assertions as full of pride and ego? I imagine it would be difficult to avoid it.

Another thing, it seems to me that you identify faith very much with mental belief — but real faith is something spiritual, a knowledge of the soul. The assertions you quote in your letter are the hard assertions of a mental belief leading to a great vehement assertion of one's creed and god because they are one's own and must therefore be greater than those of others — an attitude which is universal in human nature. Even the atheist is not tolerant, but declares his credo of Nature and Matter as the only truth and on all who disbelieve it or believe in other things he pours scorn as unenlightened morons and superstitious half-wits. I bear him no grudge for thinking me that; but I note that this attitude is not confined to religious faith but is equally natural to those who are free from religious faith and do not believe in Gods or Gurus.

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Perhaps one could say that it [*spiritual humility*] is to be aware of the relativity of what has been done compared with what is still to be done — and also to be conscious of one's being nothing without the Divine Grace.

### Sacrifice

Sacrifice has a moral and psychological value always. This value is the same no matter what may be the cause for which the sacrifice is made, provided the one who makes it believes in the truth or justice or other worthiness of his cause. If one makes the sacrifice for a cause one knows to be wrong or unworthy, all depends on the motive and spirit of the sacrifice. Bhishma accepting death in a cause he knew to be unjust, obeyed the call of loyalty to what he felt to be his personal duty. Many have done that in the past, and the moral and psychic value of their act lies, irrespective of the nature of the cause, in the nobility of the motive.

As to the other question, in this sense of the word sacrifice there is none for the man who gives up something which he does not value, except in so far as he undergoes loss, defies social ban

or obloquy or otherwise pays a price for his liberation. I may say, however, that without being cold and unloving a man may be so seized by a spiritual call or the call of a great human cause that the family or other ties count for nothing beside it, and he leaves all joyfully, without a pang, to follow the summoning Voice.

In the spiritual sense, however, sacrifice has a different meaning — it does not so much indicate giving up what is held dear as an offering of oneself, one's being, one's mind, heart, will, body, life, actions to the Divine. It has the original sense of "making sacred" and is used as an equivalent of the word Yajna. When the Gita speaks of the "sacrifice of knowledge", it does not mean a giving up of anything, but a turning of the mind towards the Divine in the search for knowledge and an offering of oneself through it. It is in this sense, too, that one speaks of the offering or sacrifice of works. The Mother has written somewhere that the spiritual sacrifice is joyful and not painful in its nature. On the spiritual path, very commonly, if a seeker still feels the old ties and responsibilities strongly, he is not asked to sever or leave them, but to let the call in him grow till all within is ready. Many, indeed, come away earlier because they feel that to cut loose is their only chance, and these have to go sometimes through a struggle. But the pain, the struggle, is not the essential character of the spiritual self-offering.

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It [*pain and struggle in offering oneself to the Divine*] simply means that your sacrifice is still mental and has not yet become spiritual in its character. When your vital being consents to give up its desires and enjoyments, when it offers itself to the Divine, then the yajna will have begun. What I meant was that the European sense of the word is not the sense of the word "yajna" or the sense of "sacrifice" in such phrases as "the sacrifice of works". It does not mean that you give up all works for the sake of the Divine — for then there would be no sacrifice of works at all. Similarly the sacrifice of knowledge does not mean that you painfully and resolutely make yourself a fool for the sake of the

Lord. Sacrifice means an inner offering to the Divine and the real spiritual sacrifice is a very joyful thing. Otherwise, one is only trying to make oneself fit and has not yet begun the real yajna. It is because your mind is struggling with your vital, the unwilling animal, and asking it to allow itself to be immolated that there is the pain and struggle. If the spiritual will (or psychic) were more in the front then you would not be lamenting over the loss of the ghee and butter and curds thrown into the Fire or trying to have a last lick at it before casting it. The only difficulty would be about bringing down the gods fully enough (a progressive labour), not about lamentations over the ghee. By the way, do you think that the Mother or myself or others who have taken up the spiritual life had not enjoyed life and that it is therefore that the Mother was able to speak of a joyous sacrifice to the Divine as the true spirit of spiritual sacrifice? Or do you think we spent the preliminary stages in longings for the lost fleshpots of Egypt and that it was only later on we felt the joy of the spiritual sacrifice? Of course we did not; we and many others had no difficulty on the score of giving up anything we thought necessary to give up and no hankerings afterwards. Your rule is as usual a stiff rule that does not at all apply generally.

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Sacrifice depends on the inner attitude. If one has nothing outward to sacrifice, one has always oneself to give.

### **Ahimsa, Destruction and Violence**

The doctrines of Ahimsa and non-violence and altruism are early steps on the road to spiritual knowledge — but once advanced on the road what is true behind them takes its place, as a thread in the complex weft of spiritual truth and feeling, not as a rigid ethical rule or all-swallowing dogma. The Manifestation here is too complex in its concealed Unity for such mental or emotional formulas to be unerring guides.

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The impersonal Truth, precisely because it is impersonal, can contain quite opposite things. There is a truth in Ahimsa, there is a truth in Destruction also. I do not teach that you should go on killing everybody every day as a spiritual dharma. I say that destruction can be done when it is part of the Divine work commanded by the Divine. Non-violence is better than violence as a rule, and still sometimes violence may be the right thing. I consider dharma as relative; unity with the Divine and action from the Divine Will the highest way. Buddha did not aim at action in the world, but at cessation from the world-existence. For that he found the eightfold Path a necessary preparatory discipline and so proclaimed it.

It [*Ahimsa*] had nothing to do with the Yuga [*at the time of Buddha*], but with the path towards liberation found by Buddha. There are many paths and all need not be one and the same in their teaching.

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Destruction in itself is neither good nor evil. It is a fact of Nature, a necessity in the play of forces as things are in this world. The Light destroys the Darkness and the Powers of Darkness, and that is not a movement of Ignorance!

It all depends on the character of the destruction and the forces that enter into it. All dread of fire or other violent forces should be overcome. For dread shows a weakness — the free spirit can stand fearless before even the biggest forces of Nature.

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This world is so arranged that it is not possible to live without some destruction of life — so for this there need be no remorse. Only one should not destroy life wantonly or inflict needless suffering on animals or any living things.

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I feel inclined to back out of the arena<sup>1</sup> or take refuge in the

<sup>1</sup> *The correspondent asked whether the violence done to animals by medical researchers was justifiable; their experiments with animals, he said, sometimes led to the saving of human lives. — Ed.*

usual saving formula, “There is much to be said on both sides.” Your view is no doubt correct from the common-sense or what might be called the “human” point of view. Krishnaprem takes the standpoint that we must not only consider the temporary good to humanity, but certain inner laws. He thinks the harm, violence or cruelty to other beings is not compensated and cannot be justified by some physical good to a section of humanity or even to humanity as a whole; such methods awake, in his opinion, a sort of Karmic reaction apart from the moral harm to the men who do these things. He is also of the opinion that the cause of disease is psychic, that is to say, subjective and the direction should be towards curing the inner causes much more than patching up by physical means. These are ideas that have their truth also. I fully recognise the psychic law and methods and their preferability, but the ordinary run of humanity is not ready for that rule and, while it is so, doctors and their physical methods will be there. I have also supported justifiable violence on justifiable occasions, e.g., Kurukshetra and the war against Hitler and all he means. The question then, from this middle point of view, about the immediate question is whether this violence is justifiable and the occasion justifiable. I back out.

### **War and Conquest**

War and conquest are part of the economy of vital Nature, it is no use blaming this or that people for doing it — everybody does it who has the power and the chance. China who now complains was herself an imperialist and colonising country through all the centuries in which Japan kept religiously within her own borders. If it were not profitable, I suppose nobody would do it. England has grown rich on the plundered wealth of India. France depends for many things on her African colonies. Japan needs an outlet for her overabundant population and safe economic markets nearby. Each is pushed by forces that use the minds of rulers and peoples to fulfil themselves — unless human nature changes no amount of moralising will prevent it.

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There has been almost continuous war in the world — it is as in the history of the Roman Republic when the gates of the temple of Janus were closed only once or twice in its many centuries — a sign that the Republic was at peace with all the world. There have been in modern times long intervals between long wars, but small ones have been generally going on somewhere or another. Man is a quarrelling and fighting animal and so long as he is so how can there be peace?

### Poverty

It is a world which has emerged from the Inconscient and these things [*poverty and misery*] are results of the imperfect working of the human mind which, being born into the ignorant life and matter, has to learn by effort and experience. Ignorance and ego have to be outgrown before there can be a true utilisation of the resources of Nature.

### Natural Calamities

Why should earthquakes occur by some wrong movement of man? When man was not there, did not earthquakes occur? If he were blotted out by poison gas or otherwise, would they cease? Earthquakes are a perturbation in Nature due to some pressure of forces; frequency of earthquakes may coincide with a violence of upheavals in human life but the upheavals of earth and human life are both results of a general clash or pressure of forces, one is not the cause of the other.