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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

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“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”

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N: *Nirodbaran's Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo*, 2001

E: *Evening Talks with Sri Aurobindo*, Recorded by A. B. Purani, 2007

A: *At the Feet of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo*, by Sahana, 1985

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PURUSHA-PRAKRITI

“This whole wide world is only he and she”

The universe is an endless masquerade:
For nothing here is utterly what it seems;
It is a dream-fact vision of a truth
Which but for the dream would not be wholly true,
A phenomenon stands out significant
Against dim backgrounds of eternity;
We accept its face and pass by all it means;
A part is seen, we take it for the whole.
Thus have they made their play with us for roles:
Author and actor with himself as scene,
He moves there as the Soul, as Nature she.

(C 33: 61)

THIS IS THE KNOT THAT TIES TOGETHER THE STARS

Two possible views of the universe

There are always two possible views of the universe. The one supposes, with modern Science, Matter to be the beginning of things and studies everything as an evolution from Matter; or, if not Matter, then, with the Sankhya philosophy, an indeterminate inconscient active Force or Prakriti of which even mind and reason are mechanical operations, — the Conscious Soul, if any exists, being a quite different and, although conscient, yet inactive entity. The other supposes the conscious soul, the Purusha, to be the material as well as the cause of the universe and Prakriti to be only its Shakti or the Force of its conscious being which operates upon itself as the material of forms.¹ The latter is the view of the Upanishads. Certainly if we study the material world only, excluding all evidence of other planes as a dream or a hallucination, if we equally exclude all evidence of operations in mind which exceed the material limitation and study only its ordinary equation with Matter, we must necessarily accept the theory of Matter as the origin and as the indispensable basis and continent. Otherwise, we shall be irresistibly led towards the early Vedantic conclusions.

(C 18: 36-37)

*

Nature takes the Soul into herself, the Soul takes Nature into himself

East and West have two ways of looking at life which are opposite sides of one reality. Between the pragmatic truth on which the vital thought of modern Europe enamoured of the vigour of life, all the dance of God in Nature, puts so vehement and exclusive a stress and the eternal immutable Truth to which the Indian mind enamoured of calm and poise loves to turn with an equal passion for an exclusive finding, there is no such divorce and quarrel as is now declared by the partisan mind, the separating reason, the absorbing passion of an exclusive will of realisation. The one eternal immutable Truth is the Spirit and without the spirit the pragmatic truth of a self-creating universe would have no origin or foundation; it would be barren of significance, empty of inner guidance, lost in its end, a firework display

1. Cf. for example, the Aitareya Upanishad which shows us the Atman or Self using the Purusha as that in which all the operations of Nature are formed.

shooting up into the void only to fall away and perish in mid-air. But neither is the pragmatic truth a dream of the non-existent, an illusion or a long lapse into some futile delirium of creative imagination; that would be to make the eternal Spirit a drunkard or a dreamer, the fool of his own gigantic self-hallucinations. The truths of universal existence are of two kinds, truths of the spirit which are themselves eternal and immutable, and these are the great things that cast themselves out into becoming and there constantly realise their powers and significances, and the play of the consciousness with them, the discords, the musical variations, soundings of possibility, progressive notations, reversions, perversions, mounting conversions into a greater figure of harmony; and of all these things the spirit has made, makes always his universe. But it is himself that he makes in it, himself that is the creator and the energy of creation and the cause and the method and the result of the working, the mechanist and the machine, the music and the musician, the poet and the poem, supermind, mind and life and matter, the soul and Nature.

An original error pursues us in our solutions of our problem. We are perplexed by the appearance of an antinomy; we set soul against Nature, the spirit against his creative energy. But Soul and Nature, Purusha and Prakriti, are two eternal lovers who possess their perpetual unity and enjoy their constant difference, and in the unity abound in the passion of the multitudinous play of their difference, and in every step of the difference abound in the secret sense or the overt consciousness of unity. Nature takes the Soul into herself so that he falls asleep in a trance of union with her absorbed passion of creation and she too seems then to be asleep in the whirl of her own creative energy; and that is the involution in Matter. Above, it may be, the Soul takes Nature into himself so that she falls asleep in a trance of oneness with the absorbed self-possession of the spirit and he too seems to be asleep in the deep of his own self-locked immobile being. But still above and below and around and within all this beat and rhythm is the eternity of the spirit who has thus figured himself in soul and nature and enjoys with a perfect awareness all that he creates in himself by this involution and evolution. The soul fulfils itself in Nature when it possesses in her the consciousness of that eternity and its power and joy and transfigures the natural becoming with the fullness of the spiritual being. The constant self-creation which we call birth finds there the perfect evolution of all that it held in its own nature and reveals its own utmost significance. The complete soul possesses all its self and all Nature.

Therefore all this evolution is a growing of the Self in material nature to the conscious possession of its own spiritual being. It begins with form — apparently a form of Force — in which a spirit is housed and hidden; it ends in a spirit which consciously directs its own force and creates or assumes its own forms for the free joy of its being in Nature. Nature holding her own self and spirit involved and suppressed within herself, an imprisoned master of existence subjected to her ways of birth and action, — yet are these ways his and this spirit the condition of her

being and the law of her workings, — commences the evolution: the spirit holding Nature conscious in himself, complete by his completeness, liberated by his liberation, perfected in his perfection, crowns the evolution. All our births are the births of this spirit and self which has become or put forth a soul in Nature. To be is the object of our existence, — there is no other end or object, for the consciousness and bliss of being is the whole beginning and middle and end, as it is that which is without beginning or end. But this means in the steps of the evolution to grow more and more until we grow into our own fullness of self; all birth is a progressive self-finding, a means of self-realisation. To grow in knowledge, in power, in delight, love and oneness, towards the infinite light, capacity and bliss of spiritual existence, to universalise ourselves till we are one with all being, and to exceed constantly our present limited self till it opens fully to the transcendence in which the universal lives and to base upon it all our becoming, that is the full evolution of what now lies darkly wrapped or works half evolved in Nature.

(C 13: 327-29)

*

Only way man can free himself

Modern science denies that man has a soul. Science considers only the laws of nature. It regards nature as material, and man as merely a product of nature. It says man is a creation of natural forces. All his actions are results of fixed laws, and he has no freedom. According to the Sankhya, man has a soul and is essentially the Purusha and not matter. The spirit does not act. The soul is calm and motionless. Prakriti is always shifting and changing, and under her influence all actions take place. Prakriti acts.

Man can only free himself by recognising that he is the Purusha. Srikrishna adopts this theory of Sankhya in the Gita, and he also adopts the philosophy of Vedanta. He says that man has an immortal soul, but there is also a universal soul. Man is merely part of God. He is merely a part of something that is eternal, infinite, omniscient and omnipotent. This eternal power is what really exists, and in all that we see, hear, feel, it is He alone who exists. It is He alone whom we feel and see.

(C 8: 48-49)

*

Not only Being but Shakti

Science does not as yet recognise God. Taking its stand on the material senses and logical argument from external phenomena it demands proof before it will admit His existence. It sees plenty of proof of Shakti, of Prakriti, of Nature; it sees none of the Purusha or any room for His existence. If He exists at all, it must be as an Impersonal Being immanent in but different from Force and Energy and Himself inactive; but even of this there is no proof. Religion holds that God is not only impersonal but personal, not only Purusha but Prakriti, not only Being but Shakti; He is all. For the proof of its position Religion appeals to something higher than logic or the senses, to spiritual experience and the direct knowledge drawn from the secret discipline it has developed in most parts of the world.

(C 8: 110)

*

Philosophical knowledge of the Sankhya

. . . Kapila, the ancient prehistoric Master of Thought, had laid down for mankind, the method called Sankhya or the law of Enumeration. The method of Kapila consisted in guidance by pure discriminative reason and it took its name from one of its principal rules, the law of enumeration and generalisation. They enumerated first the immediate Truths-in-Things which they could distinguish or deduce from things obviously phenomenal, and from these by generalisation they arrived at a much smaller number of ulterior Truths-in-Things of which the immediate were merely aspects. And then having enumerated these ulterior Truths-in-Things, they were able by generalisation to reduce them to a very small number of ultimate Truths-in-Things, the Tattwas (literally The-nesses) of the developed Sankhya philosophy. And these Tattwas once enumerated with some approach to certainty, was it not possible to generalise yet one step farther? The Sankhya did so generalise and by this supreme and final generalisation arrived at the very last step on which, in its own unaided strength, it could take safe footing. This was the great principle of Prakriti, the single eternal indestructible principle and origin of Matter which by perpetual evolution rolls out through aeons and aeons the unending panorama of things.¹ And for whose benefit? Surely for those conscious knowing and perceiving Egos, the army of witnesses, who, each in his private space of reasoning and perceiving Mind partitioned off by an enveloping medium of gross matter, sit for ever as spectators in the theatre of the Universe! For ever, thought the Sankhyas,

1. Note that Matter here not only includes gross matter with which Western Science is mainly concerned, but subtle matter, the material in which thought & feeling work, and causal matter in which the fundamental operations of the Will-to-live are conducted.

since the Egos, though their partitions are being continually broken down and built anew and the spaces occupied never remain permanently identical, yet seem themselves to be no less eternal and indestructible than Prakriti.

This then was the wide fixed lake of ascertained philosophical knowledge into which the method of Sankhya, pure intellectual reasoning on definite principles, led in the mind of ancient India. Branchings off, artificial canals from the reservoir were not, indeed, wanting. Some by resolving that army of witnesses into a single Witness, arrived at the dual conception of God and Nature, Purusha & Prakriti, Spirit and Matter, Ego and Non-ego.

(C 18: 353-54)

*

To discriminate between Conscious-Soul and Nature-Energy

But the Greeks failed to go forward to that final discrimination which India attributed to Kapila, the supreme analytical thinker, — the discrimination between Prakriti and her cosmic principles, her twenty-four tattwas forming the subjective and objective aspects of Nature, and between Prakriti and Purusha, Conscious-Soul and Nature-Energy. Therefore while in the Sankhya ether, fire and the rest are only principles of the objective evolution of Prakriti, evolutionary aspects of the original *phusis*, the early Greeks could not get back beyond these aspects of Nature to the idea of a pure energy, nor could they at all account for her subjective side. The Fire of Heraclitus has to do duty at once for the original substance of all Matter and for God and Eternity. This preoccupation with Nature-Energy and the failure to fathom its relations with Soul has persisted in modern scientific thought, and we find there too the same attempt to identify some primary principle of Nature, ether or electricity, with the original Force.

(C 13: 234)

*

There are Two who are One and play in many worlds

All here where each thing seems its lonely self
 Are figures of the sole transcendent One:
 Only by him they are, his breath is their life;
 An unseen Presence moulds the oblivious clay.
 A playmate in the mighty Mother's game,
 One came upon the dubious whirling globe
 To hide from her pursuit in force and form.

A secret spirit in the Inconscient's sleep,
 A shapeless Energy, a voiceless Word,
 He was here before the elements could emerge,
 Before there was light of mind or life could breathe.
 Accomplice of her cosmic huge pretence,
 His semblances he turns to real shapes
 And makes the symbol equal with the truth:
 He gives to his timeless thoughts a form in Time.
 He is the substance, he the self of things;
 She has forged from him her works of skill and might:
 She wraps him in the magic of her moods
 And makes of his myriad truths her countless dreams.
 The Master of being has come down to her,
 An immortal child born in the fugitive years.
 In objects wrought, in the persons she conceives,
 Dreaming she chases her idea of him,
 And catches here a look and there a gest:
 Ever he repeats in them his ceaseless births.
 He is the Maker and the world he made,
 He is the vision and he is the Seer;
 He is himself the actor and the act,
 He is himself the knower and the known,
 He is himself the dreamer and the dream.
 There are Two who are One and play in many worlds;
 In Knowledge and Ignorance they have spoken and met
 And light and darkness are their eyes' interchange;
 Our pleasure and pain are their wrestle and embrace,
 Our deeds, our hopes are intimate to their tale;
 They are married secretly in our thought and life.

(C 33: 60-61)

*

The first double term from which our Yoga has to start

The self which we have to perfect, is neither pure atman which is ever perfect nor the ego which is the cause of imperfection, but the divine self manifested in the shifting stream of Nature.

Existence is composed of Prakriti & Purusha, the consciousness that sees and the consciousness that executes & formalises what we see. The one we call Soul, the

other Nature. These are the first double term from which our Yoga has to start. When we come to look in at ourselves instead of out at the world and begin to analyse our subjective experience, we find that there are two parts of our being which can be, to all appearance, entirely separated from each other, one a consciousness which is still & passive and supports, and the other a consciousness which is busy, active & creative, and is supported. The passive & fundamental consciousness is the Soul, the Purusha, Witness or Sakshi; the active & superstructural consciousness is Nature, Prakriti, processive or creative energy of the Sakshi. But the two seem at first to stand apart & distinct, as if they had no share in each other.

The Purusha, still & silent witness of whatever Prakriti chooses to create, not interfering with her works, but reflecting only whatever forms, names & movements she casts on the pure mirror of his eternal existence and the Prakriti restlessly creating, acting, forming & effecting things for the delight of the Purusha, compose the double system of the Sankhyas. But as we continue analysing their relations and accumulate more and more experience of our subjective life, we find that this seeing of the Purusha is in effect a command. Whatever Prakriti perceives it to be the pleasure of the Purusha to see, she tends to preserve in his subjective experience or to establish; whatever she perceives it to be his pleasure to cease to see, she tends to renounce & abolish. Whatever he consents to in her, she forces on him & is glad of her mastery & his submission, but whenever he insists, she is bound eventually to obey. Easily found to be true in our subjective experience, this ultimate principle of things is eventually discovered by the Yogin to determine even objective phenomena. The Purusha & Prakriti are therefore not only the Witness & the Activity witnessed, but the Lord & his executive energy. The Purusha is Ishwara, the Prakriti is His shakti. Their play with each other is both the motive & the executive force of all existence in the universe.

(C 12: 194-95)

*

This whole wide world is only he and she

Here on the earth where we must fill our parts,
 We know not how shall run the drama's course;
 Our uttered sentences veil in their thought.
 Her mighty plan she holds back from our sight:
 She has concealed her glory and her bliss
 And disguised the Love and Wisdom in her heart;
 Of all the marvel and beauty that are hers,
 Only a darkened little we can feel.
 He too wears a diminished godhead here;

He has forsaken his omnipotence,
 His calm he has foregone and infinity.
 He knows her only, he has forgotten himself;
 To her he abandons all to make her great.
 He hopes in her to find himself anew,
 Incarnate, wedding his infinity's peace
 To her creative passion's ecstasy.
 Although possessor of the earth and heavens,
 He leaves to her the cosmic management
 And watches all, the Witness of her scene.
 A supernumerary on her stage,
 He speaks no words or hides behind the wings.
 He takes birth in her world, waits on her will,
 Divines her enigmatic gesture's sense,
 The fluctuating chance turns of her mood,
 Works out her meanings she seems not to know
 And serves her secret purpose in long Time.
 As one too great for him he worships her;
 He adores her as his regent of desire,
 He yields to her as the mover of his will,
 He burns the incense of his nights and days
 Offering his life, a splendour of sacrifice.
 A rapt solicitor for her love and grace,
 His bliss in her to him is his whole world:
 He grows through her in all his being's powers;
 He reads by her God's hidden aim in things.
 Or, a courtier in her countless retinue,
 Content to be with her and feel her near
 He makes the most of the little that she gives
 And all she does drapes with his own delight.
 A glance can make his whole day wonderful,
 A word from her lips with happiness wings the hours.
 He leans on her for all he does and is:
 He builds on her largesses his proud fortunate days
 And trails his peacock-plumaged joy of life
 And suns in the glory of her passing smile.
 In a thousand ways he serves her royal needs;
 He makes the hours pivot around her will,
 Makes all reflect her whims; all is their play:
 This whole wide world is only he and she.

(C 33: 61-63)

The human soul has to go back in its self-existence to Purusha even while participating in the movement of Prakriti

To this end it must recover the silent Brahman within. The Lord possesses always His double term and conducts the action of the universe, extended in it, but not attached to or limited by His works. The human soul, entangled in mind, is obscured in vision by the rushing stream of Prakriti's works and fancies itself to be a part of that stream and swept in its currents and in its eddies. It has to go back in its self-existence to the silent Purusha even while participating in its self-becoming in the movement of Prakriti. It becomes, then, not only like the silent Purusha, the witness and upholder, but also the Lord and the free enjoyer of Prakriti and her works. An absolute calm and passivity, purity and equality within, a sovereign and inexhaustible activity without is the nature of Brahman as we see it manifested in the universe.

(C 17: 46)

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The Two who are one are the secret of all power

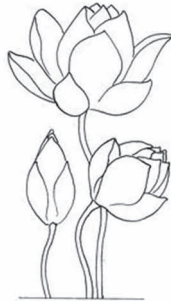
This is the knot that ties together the stars:
 The Two who are one are the secret of all power,
 The Two who are one are the might and right in things.
 His soul, silent, supports the world and her,
 His acts are her commandment's registers.
 Happy, inert, he lies beneath her feet:
 His breast he offers for her cosmic dance
 Of which our lives are the quivering theatre,
 And none could bear but for his strength within,
 Yet none would leave because of his delight.
 His works, his thoughts have been devised by her,
 His being is a mirror vast of hers:
 Active, inspired by her he speaks and moves;
 His deeds obey her heart's unspoken demands:
 Passive, he bears the impacts of the world
 As if her touches shaping his soul and life:
 His journey through the days is her sun-march;
 He runs upon her roads; hers is his course.
 A witness and student of her joy and dole,
 A partner in her evil and her good,
 He has consented to her passionate ways,

He is driven by her sweet and dreadful force.
His sanctioning name initials all her works;
His silence is his signature to her deeds;
In the execution of her drama's scheme,
In her fancies of the moment and its mood,
In the march of this obvious ordinary world
Where all is deep and strange to the eyes that see
And Nature's common forms are marvel-wefts,
She through his witness sight and motion of might
Unrolls the material of her cosmic Act,
Her happenings that exalt and smite the soul,
Her force that moves, her powers that save and slay,
Her Word that in the silence speaks to our hearts,
Her silence that transcends the summit Word,
Her heights and depths to which our spirit moves,
Her events that weave the texture of our lives
And all by which we find or lose ourselves,
Things sweet and bitter, magnificent and mean,
Things terrible and beautiful and divine.
Her empire in the cosmos she has built,
He is governed by her subtle and mighty laws.
His consciousness is a babe upon her knees,
His being a field of her vast experiment,
Her endless space is the playground of his thoughts;
She binds to knowledge of the shapes of Time
And the creative error of limiting mind
And chance that wears the rigid face of fate
And her sport of death and pain and Nescience,
His changed and struggling immortality.
His soul is a subtle atom in a mass,
His substance a material for her works.
His spirit survives amid the death of things,
He climbs to eternity through being's gaps,
He is carried by her from Night to deathless Light.
This grand surrender is his free-will's gift,
His pure transcendent force submits to hers.
In the mystery of her cosmic ignorance,
In the insoluble riddle of her play,
A creature made of perishable stuff,
In the pattern she has set for him he moves,

He thinks with her thoughts, with her trouble his bosom heaves;
 He seems the thing that she would have him seem,
 He is whatever her artist will can make.
 Although she drives him on her fancy's roads,
 At play with him as with her child or slave,
 To freedom and the Eternal's mastery
 And immortality's stand above the world,
 She moves her seeming puppet of an hour.
 Even in his mortal session in body's house,
 An aimless traveller between birth and death,
 Ephemeral dreaming of immortality,
 To reign she spurs him. He takes up her powers;
 He has harnessed her to the yoke of her own law.
 His face of human thought puts on a crown.
 Held in her leash, bound to her veiled caprice,
 He studies her ways if so he may prevail
 Even for an hour and she work out his will;
 He makes of her his moment passion's serf:
 To obey she feigns, she follows her creature's lead:
 For him she was made, lives only for his use.
 But conquering her, then is he most her slave;
 He is her dependent, all his means are hers;
 Nothing without her he can, she rules him still.
 At last he wakes to a memory of Self:
 He sees within the face of deity,
 The Godhead breaks out through the human mould:
 Her highest heights she unmask and is his mate.
 Till then he is a plaything in her game;
 Her seeming regent, yet her fancy's toy,
 A living robot moved by her energy's springs,
 He acts as in the movements of a dream,
 An automaton stepping in the grooves of Fate,
 He stumbles on driven by her whip of Force:
 His thought labours, a bullock in Time's fields;
 His will he thinks his own, is shaped in her forge.
 Obedient to World-Nature's dumb control,
 Driven by his own formidable Power,
 His chosen partner in a titan game,
 Her will he has made the master of his fate,
 Her whim the dispenser of his pleasure and pain;
 He has sold himself into her regal power

For any blow or boon that she may choose:
Even in what is suffering to our sense,
He feels the sweetness of her mastering touch,
In all experience meets her blissful hands;
On his heart he bears the happiness of her tread
And the surprise of her arrival's joy
In each event and every moment's chance.
All she can do is marvellous in his sight:
He revels in her, a swimmer in her sea,
A tireless amateur of her world-delight,
He rejoices in her every thought and act
And gives consent to all that she can wish;
Whatever she desires he wills to be:
The Spirit, the innumerable One,
He has left behind his lone eternity,
He is an endless birth in endless Time,
Her finite's multitude in an infinite Space.

(C 33: 63-66)



PURUSHA AND PRAKRITI — TWO POWERS OF THE BEING

The Purusha looks at the world as Prakriti represents it to be

Q: What is the characteristic of the Purusha on each plane of being — the physical, the vital and the mental — looking at the world?

The Purusha looks at the world as Prakriti represents it to be. On the mental plane Prakriti represents thoughts, ideas — in short, all mental movements. On the vital plane Prakriti represents itself as desires — in short, as action of the vital force. On the physical plane it represents itself as the unchangeable law of physical life.

Q: When the Purusha separates itself from Prakriti, how is it possible for it to aspire for something higher?

It is not the Purusha but the Prakriti which has to be made to aspire and made fit. The Purusha is silent, passive, looking at Prakriti.

(E: 456)

*

The executive side of Shakti

What is meant by Prakriti or Nature is the outer or executive side of the Shakti or Conscious Force which forms and moves the worlds. This outer side appears here to be mechanical, a play of the forces, Gunas, etc. Behind it is the living Consciousness and Force of the Divine, the divine Shakti. The Prakriti itself is divided into the lower and higher, — the lower is the Prakriti of the Ignorance, the Prakriti of mind, life and Matter separated in consciousness from the Divine; the higher is the Divine Prakriti of Sachchidananda with its manifesting power of supermind, always aware of the Divine and free from Ignorance and its consequences. Man so long as he is in the ignorance is subject to the lower Prakriti, but by spiritual evolution he becomes aware of the higher Nature and seeks to come into contact with it. He can ascend into it and it can descend into him — such an ascent and descent can transform the lower nature of mind, life and Matter.

(S 22: 287)

*

In the acceptance lies the responsibility

By Prakriti is meant universal Prakriti. Universal Prakriti entering into the vital being creates desires which appear by its habitual response as an individual nature; but if the habitual desires she throws in are rejected and exiled, the being remains but the old individual Prakriti of vital desire is no longer there — a new nature is formed responding to the Truth above and not to the lower Nature.

Universal Prakriti determined it [the habit of response] and the soul or Purusha accepted it. In the acceptance lies the responsibility. The Purusha is that which sanctions or refuses. The vital being responds to the ordinary life waves in the animal; man responds to them but has the power of mental control. He has also, as the mental Purusha is awake in him, the power to choose whether he shall have desire or train his being to surmount it. Finally there is the possibility of bringing down a higher nature which will not be subject to desire but act on another vital principle.

(S 22: 319)

*

Purusha and Prakriti in Sankhya

The distinction between Purusha and Prakriti is according to the Sankhya System — the Purusha is the silent witness consciousness which observes the actions of Prakriti — Prakriti is the force of Nature which one feels as doing all the actions, when one gets rid of the sense of the ego as doer. Then there is the realisation of these 2 entities. This is quite different from the psychic being. It is felt in the mind, vital, physical — most easily in the mind where the mental being (Purusha) is seated and controls the others (*manomayaḥ puruṣaḥ prāṇa-sārīra-netā*).

(S 22: 301)

*

Metaphysical idea of Purusha-Prakriti

In the philosophy of the Sankhyas we find developed most thoroughly the metaphysical idea of Purusha-Prakriti. These two are eternally separate entities, but in relation to each other. Prakriti is Nature-power, an executive Power, it is Energy apart from Consciousness; for Consciousness belongs to the Purusha, Prakriti without Purusha is inert, mechanical, inconscient. Prakriti develops as its formal self and basis of action primal Matter and in it manifests life and sense and mind and intelligence; but intelligence too, since it is part of Nature and its product in primal Matter, is also

inert, mechanical, inconscient, — a conception which sheds a certain light on the order and perfectly related workings of the Inconscient in the material universe: it is the light of the soul, the Spirit, that is imparted to the mechanical workings of sense-mind and intelligence, they become conscious by its consciousness, even as they become active only by the assent of the spirit. The Purusha becomes free by drawing back from Prakriti; it becomes master of her by refusing to be involved in Matter. Nature acts by three principles, modes or qualities of its stuff and its action, which in us become the fundamental modes of our psychological and physical substance and its workings, the principle of inertia, the principle of kinesis and the principle of balance, light and harmony: when these are in unequal motion, her action takes place; when they fall into equilibrium she passes into quiescence. Purusha, conscious being, is plural, not one and single, while Nature is one: it would seem to follow that whatever principle of oneness we find in existence belongs to Nature, but each soul is independent and unique, sole to itself and separate whether in its enjoyment of Nature or its liberation from Nature. All these positions of the Sankhya we find to be perfectly valid in experience when we come into direct inner contact with the realities of individual soul and universal Nature; but they are pragmatic truths and we are not bound to accept them as the whole or the fundamental truth either of self or of Nature. Prakriti presents itself as an inconscient Energy in the material world, but, as the scale of consciousness rises, she reveals herself more and more as a conscious force and we perceive that even her inconscience concealed a secret consciousness; so too conscious being is many in its individual souls, but in its self we can experience it as one in all and one in its own essential existence. Moreover, the experience of soul and Nature as dual is true, but the experience of their unity has also its validity. If Nature or Energy is able to impose its forms and workings on Being, it can only be because it is Nature or Energy of Being and so the Being can accept them as its own; if the Being can become lord of Nature, it must be because it is its own Nature which it had passively watched doing its work, but can control and master; even in its passivity its consent is necessary to the action of Prakriti and this relation shows sufficiently that the two are not alien to each other. The duality is a position taken up, a double status accepted for the operations of the self-manifestation of the being; but there is no eternal and fundamental separateness and dualism of Being and its Consciousness-Force, of the Soul and Nature.

(C 21: 363-65)

*

Profounder results

It is only when we follow the yogic process of quieting the mind itself that a profounder result of our self-observation becomes possible. For first we discover

that mind is a subtle substance, a general determinate — or generic indeterminate — which mental energy when it operates throws into forms or particular determinations of itself, thoughts, concepts, percepts, mental sentiments, activities of will and reactions of feeling, but which, when the energy is quiescent, can live either in an inert torpor or in an immobile silence and peace of self-existence. Next we see that the determinations of our mind do not all proceed from itself; for waves and currents of mental energy enter into it from outside: these take form in it or appear already formed from some universal Mind or from other minds and are accepted by us as our own thinking. We can perceive also an occult or subliminal mind in ourselves from which thoughts and perceptions and will-impulses and mental feelings arise; we can perceive too higher planes of consciousness from which a superior mind energy works through us or upon us. Finally we discover that that which observes all this is a mental being supporting the mind substance and mind energy; without this presence, their upholder and source of sanctions, they could not exist or operate. This mental being or Purusha first appears as a silent witness and, if that were all, we would have to accept the determinations of mind as a phenomenal activity imposed upon the being by Nature, by Prakriti, or else as a creation presented to it by Prakriti, a world of thought which Nature constructs and offers to the observing Purusha. But afterwards we find that the Purusha, the mental being, can depart from its posture of a silent or accepting Witness; it can become the source of reactions, accept, reject, even rule and regulate, become the giver of the command, the knower. A knowledge also arises that this mind-substance manifests the mental being, is its own expressive substance and the mental energy is its own consciousness-force, so that it is reasonable to conclude that all mind determinations arise from the being of the Purusha. . . .

(C 21: 322-23)

*

Distinction between Purusha and Prakriti

There is one common Force working in all and a vibration of that Force or any one of its movements can awake (it does not always) the same vibration in another.

There is a constant movement (Prakriti) and a constant silence (Purusha).

(S 23: 1080)

*

The sea and the waves

Prakriti is the Force that acts. A Force may be in action or in quiescence, but when it rests it is as much a Force as when it acts. The gunas are an action of the Force, they are in the Force itself. The sea is there and the waves are there, but the waves are not the sea and when there are no waves and the sea is still, it does not stop being the sea.

(S 23: 684-85)

*

Prakriti not equivalent with action

You seem to think that action and Prakriti are the same thing and where there is no action there can be no Prakriti! Purusha and Prakriti are separate powers of the being. It is not that Purusha = quiescence and Prakriti = action, so that when all is quiescent there is no Prakriti and when all is active there is no Purusha. When all is active, there is still the Purusha behind the active Nature and when all is quiescent, there is still the Prakriti, but the Prakriti at rest.

(S 23: 684)

*

Shakti behind the executive force

Prakriti is only the executive or working force — the Power behind the Prakriti is Shakti. It is the Chit-Shakti in manifestation: that is the spiritual consciousness.

(S 23: 1080)

*

Duality in the being on all its planes has to be grasped and accepted

In the experience of yoga the self or being is in essence one with the Divine or at least it is a portion of the Divine and has all the divine potentialities. But in manifestation it takes two aspects, the Purusha and Prakriti, conscious being and Nature. In Nature here the Divine is veiled, and the individual being is subjected to Nature which acts here as the lower Prakriti, a force of Ignorance, Avidya. The Purusha in itself is divine, but exteriorised in the ignorance of Nature it is the individual apparent being imperfect with her imperfection. Thus the soul or psychic essence, which is the Purusha entering into the evolution and supporting it, carries

in itself all the divine potentialities; but the individual psychic being which it puts forth as its representative assumes the imperfection of Nature and evolves in it till it has recovered its full psychic essence and united itself with the Self above of which the soul is the individual projection in the evolution. This duality in the being on all its planes — for it is true in different ways not only of the Self and the psychic but of the mental, vital and physical Purushas — has to be grasped and accepted before the experiences of the yoga can be fully understood.

The Being is one throughout, but on each plane of Nature, it is represented by a form of itself which is proper to that plane, the mental Purusha in the mental plane, the vital Purusha in the vital, the physical Purusha in the physical. . . .

(S 22: 284-85)

*

‘Overself’

I spoke of the *personal* Overself — meaning the realisation of something in us (the Purusha) that is not the Prakriti, not the movements of mind, vital or physical, but something that is the Thinker, etc. This Purusha can give assent to any movement of nature or withhold it or it can direct the Prakriti what to do or not to do. . . . It is usually the mental Purusha (Manomaya Purusha) that one thus realises, but there is also the Pranamaya or vital Purusha. By the word Overself they probably mean this Purusha — they take it as a sort of personal Atman.

(S 24: 1515)

*

The Kshara, the Akshara, and the ego

Purusha in Prakriti is the Kshara Purusha — standing back from it is the Akshara Purusha.

Ego-sense and Purusha are two quite different things — ego-sense is a mechanism of Prakriti, Purusha is the conscious being.

(S 22: 291)

*

The old Vedantic idea

That is the old Vedantic idea — to be free and detached within and leave the Prakriti to itself. When you die, the Purusha will go to glory and the Prakriti drop off — perhaps into hell. This theory is a source of any amount of self-deception and wilful self-indulgence.

(S 23: 1008)

*

Two sides of the nature

It is the Purusha and Prakriti sides of the nature — one leading to pure conscious existence, static, the other to pure conscious force, dynamic. The past darkness they have come out of is that of ignorance, the future darkness that is felt above is superconscience. But, of course, the superconscience is really luminous — only its light is not seen. The three forms of consciousness are the three sides of Nature represented by the three gunas — force of subconscious tamas, Inertia, which is the law of Matter, force of half-conscious desire, Kinesis, which is rajas, which is the law of Life, and force of sattwic Prakasha, which is the law of Intelligence.

(S 23: 1079-80)

*

First words of inner wisdom

A distinction, the distinction very keenly made here, between the plane of phenomenal process, of externalised Prakriti, and the plane of Divine Reality ranks among the first words of the inner wisdom. The turn given to it in these pages is not merely an ingenious explanation; it expresses very soundly one of the clear certainties you meet when you step across the border and look at the outer world from the standing-ground of the inner spiritual experience. The more you go inward or upward, the more the view of things changes and the outer knowledge Science organises takes its real and very limited place. Science, like most mental and external knowledge, gives you only truth of process.

(S 22: 196)

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Saying “Yes” or “No”

There is no such thing as “free” will, but there is the power of the Purusha to say “yes” or “no” to any particular pressure of Prakriti and there is the power of the mind, vital etc. to echo feebly or strongly the Purusha’s “yes” or “no” or to resist it. A constant (not a momentary) Yes or No has its effect in the play of the forces and the selection by the Something.

(N: 270)

*

The experience of Purusha-Prakriti is of immense pragmatic importance

The Conscious Being, Purusha, is the Self as originator, witness, support and lord and enjoyer of the forms and works of Nature. As the aspect of Self is in its essential character transcendental even when involved and identified with its universal and individual becomings, so the Purusha aspect is characteristically universal-individual and intimately connected with Nature even when separated from her. For this conscious Spirit while retaining its impersonality and eternity, its universality, puts on at the same time a more personal aspect;¹ it is the impersonal-personal being in Nature from whom it is not altogether detached, for it is always coupled with her: Nature acts for the Purusha and by its sanction, for its will and pleasure; the Conscious Being imparts its consciousness to the Energy we call Nature, receives in that consciousness her workings as in a mirror, accepts the forms which she, the executive cosmic Force, creates and imposes on it, gives or withdraws its sanction from her movements. The experience of Purusha-Prakriti, the Spirit or Conscious Being in its relations to Nature, is of immense pragmatic importance; for on these relations the whole play of the consciousness depends in the embodied being. If the Purusha in us is passive and allows Nature to act, accepting all she imposes on him, giving a constant automatic sanction, then the soul in mind, life, body, the mental, vital, physical being in us, becomes subject to our nature, ruled by its formation, driven by its activities; that is the normal state of our ignorance. If the Purusha in us becomes aware of itself as the Witness and stands back from Nature, that is the first step to the soul’s freedom; for it becomes detached, and it is possible then to know Nature and her processes and in all independence, since we are no longer involved in her works, to accept or not to accept, to make the sanction no longer automatic but free and effective; we can choose what she shall do or not do in us, or we can stand back

¹ The Sankhya philosophy stresses this personal aspect, makes the Purusha many, plural, and assigns universality to Nature; in this view each soul is an independent existence although all souls experience a common universal Nature.

altogether from her works and withdraw into the Self's spiritual silence, or we can reject her present formations and rise to a spiritual level of existence and from there re-create our existence. The Purusha can cease to be subject, *anīśa*, and become lord of its nature, *īśvara*.

(C 21: 362-63)

*

Necessity of duality

It is the Reality, the Self, that takes the position of the Conscious Being regarding and accepting or ruling the works of its own Nature. An apparent duality is created in order that there may be a free action of Nature working itself out with the support of the Spirit and again a free and masterful action of the Spirit controlling and working out Nature. This duality is also necessary that the Spirit may be at any time at liberty to draw back from any formation of its Nature and dissolve all formation or accept or enforce a new or a higher formation. These are very evident possibilities of the Spirit in its dealings with its own Force and they can be observed and verified in our own experience; they are logical results of the powers of the Infinite Consciousness, powers which we have seen to be native to its infinity. The Purusha aspect and the Prakriti aspect go always together and whatever status Nature or Consciousness-force in action assumes, manifests or develops, there is a corresponding status of the Spirit. In its supreme status the Spirit is the supreme Conscious Being, Purushottama, and the Consciousness-Force is his supreme Nature, Para-Prakriti. In each status of the gradations of Nature, the Spirit takes a poise of its being proper to that gradation; in Mind-Nature it becomes the mental being, in Life-Nature it becomes the vital being, in nature of Matter it becomes the physical being, in supermind it becomes the Being of Knowledge; in the supreme spiritual status it becomes the Being of Bliss and pure Existence. In us, in the embodied individual, it stands behind all as the psychic Entity, the inner Self supporting the other formulations of our consciousness and spiritual existence. The Purusha, individual in us, is cosmic in the cosmos, transcendent in the transcendence: the identity with the Self is apparent, but it is the Self in its pure impersonal personal status of a Spirit in things and beings — impersonal because undifferentiated by personal quality, personal because it presides over the individualisations of self in each individual — which deals with the works of its Consciousness-force, its executive force of self-nature, in whatever poise is necessary for that purpose.

(C 21: 365-66)

*

The Conscient — conscient even in unconscious things

. . . This inconscience [*of material Nature*] is no more real than the ignorance of exclusive concentration in our temporary being which limits the waking consciousness of man; for as in us, so in the atom, the metal, the plant, in every form of material Nature, in every energy of material Nature, there is, we know, a secret soul, a secret will, a secret intelligence at work, other than the mute self-oblivious form, the Conscient — conscient even in unconscious things — of the Upanishad, without whose presence and informing conscious-force or Tapas no work of Nature could be done. What is inconscient there is the Prakriti, the formal, the motional action of the energy absorbed in the working, identified with it, to such an extent as to be bound in a sort of trance or swoon of concentration, unable to go back, while imprisoned in that form, to its real self, to the integral conscious being and the integral force of conscious being which it has put behind it, of which in its ecstatic trance of mere working and energy it has become oblivious. Prakriti, the executive Force, becomes unaware of Purusha, the Conscious Being, holds him hidden within herself and becomes again slowly aware only with the emergence of consciousness from this swoon of the Inconscience. Purusha indeed consents to assume the apparent form of itself which Prakriti constructs for it; it seems to become the Inconscient, the physical being, the vital being, the mental being: but in all these it remains still in reality itself; the light of the secret conscious Being supports and informs the action of the inconscient or emergingly conscious energy of Nature.

(C 21: 609-10)

*

Purusha commands Prakriti, Prakriti does not compel Purusha

Therefore the truth of the Soul is freedom and mastery, not subjection and bondage. Purusha commands Prakriti, Prakriti does not compel Purusha. *Na karma lipyate nare.*

(C 17: 49)

*

Supreme Soul and dynamic Nature

. . . so we have in Kalidasa an intense hedonistic impulse thrilling through speech and informing action. An imaginative pleasure in all shades of thought and of sentiment, a rich delight of the mind in its emotions, a luxuriousness of ecstasy and

grief, a free abandonment to amorous impulse and rapture, a continual joy of life and seeking for beauty mark the period when India, having for the time exhausted the possibilities of soul-experience attainable through the spirit and the imaginative reason, was now attempting to find out the utmost each sense could feel, probing and sounding the soul-possibilities in matter and even seeking God through the senses. The emotional religion of the Vaishnava Puranas which takes as its type of the relation between the human soul and the Supreme the passion of a woman for her lover, was already developing. The corresponding Tantric development of Shaivism may not yet have established itself fully; but the concretisation of the idea of Purusha-Prakriti, the union of Ishwara and Shakti, from which it arose, was already there in the symbolic legends of the Puranas and one of these is the subject of Kalidasa's greatest epic poem. The Birth of the War-God stands on the same height in classical Sanskrit as the Paradise Lost in English literature: it is the masterpiece and *magnum opus* of the age on the epic level. The central idea of this great unfinished poem, the marriage of Siva and Parvati, typified in its original idea the union of Purusha and Prakriti, the supreme Soul and dynamic Nature by which the world is created; but this type of divine legend was used esoterically to typify also the Nature-Soul's search for and attainment of God, and something of this conception pierces through the description of Parvati's seeking after Siva.

(C 1: 165-66)

*

Combining Purusha and Prakriti in one image

To use the terms of Indian philosophy, most art expresses the play of Prakriti; Buddhistic art in its most characteristic creations expresses the absolute repose of the Purusha; Hindu art tends to combine the Purusha and Prakriti in one image.

(C 1: 584)

*

Man, the Purusha

God cannot cease from leaning down towards Nature, nor man from aspiring towards the Godhead. It is the eternal relation of the finite to the infinite. When they seem to turn from each other, it is to recoil for a more intimate meeting.

In man nature of the world becomes again self-conscious so that it may take the great leap towards its Enjoyer. This is the Enjoyer whom unknowingly it possesses, whom life and sensation possessing deny and denying seek. Nature of the world

knows not God only because it knows not itself; when it knows itself, it shall know unalloyed delight of being.

Possession in oneness and not loss in oneness is the secret. God and Man, World and Beyond-world become one when they know each other. Their division is the cause of ignorance as ignorance is the cause of suffering.

Man seeks at first blindly and does not even know that he is seeking his divine self; for he starts from the obscurity of material Nature and even when he begins to see, he is long blinded by the light that is increasing in him. God too answers obscurely to his search; He seeks and enjoys man's blindness like the hands of a little child that grope after its mother.

God and Nature are like a boy and girl at play and in love. They hide and run from each other when glimpsed so that they may be sought after and chased and captured.

Man is God hiding himself from Nature so that he may possess her by struggle, insistence, violence and surprise. God is universal and transcendent Man hiding himself from his own individuality in the human being.

The animal is Man disguised in a hairy skin and upon four legs; the worm is Man writhing and crawling towards the evolution of his Manhood. Even crude forms of Matter are Man in his inchoate body. All things are Man, the Purusha.

For what do we mean by Man? An uncreated and indestructible soul that has housed itself in a mind and body made of its own elements.

(C 13: 202-03)



OVERCOMING SOME OF THE MOVEMENTS OF PRAKRITI

Not talking about or criticising others

I see very well that my consciousness has become externalised. When shall I become free from taking interest in the discussions and criticisms made by other people? One part of mine is very eager to join in the discussions. Now it is kept down; otherwise it will pop up at any opportunity. At times in moods of confidence I feel that I have nothing to do with these things. But alas, the moods don't last and I lose my proper condition. However, when a veil falls upon the light of awareness, it produces a suffocation and I cry, "Oh how I wish I could get out of this intolerable situation!"

Sri Aurobindo: It is also better to be more strict about not talking of others and criticising them with the ordinary mind — not only in the case of Y and X but all. It is necessary in order to develop a deeper consciousness and outlook on things that understands in silence the movements of Nature in oneself and others and is not moved or disturbed or superficially interested and drawn into an external movement.

Dismiss all that and get back into your poise.

(A: 133-34)

*

Quieting the mental and vital as a step towards the psychic

One must get the power to quiet the mental and vital, if not at first at all times, yet whenever one wills — for it is the mind and vital that cover up the psychic being as well as the self (Atman) and to get at either one must get in through their veil; but if they are always active and you are always identified with their activities, the veil will always be there. It is also possible to detach yourself and look at these activities as if they were not your own but a mechanical action of Nature which you observe as a disinterested witness. One can then become aware of an inner being which is separate, calm and uninvolved in Nature. This may be the inner mental or vital Purusha and not the psychic, but to get at the consciousness of the inner *manomaya* and *prāṇamaya* Purusha is always a step towards the unveiling of the psychic being.

(S 23: 1005)

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Standing back: the thought-flow is not yourself

The mind is always in activity, but we do not observe fully what it is doing, but allow ourselves to be carried away in the stream of continual thinking. When we try to concentrate, this stream of self-made mechanical thinking becomes prominent to our observation. It is the first normal obstacle (the other is sleep during meditation) to the effort for yoga.

The best thing to do is to realise that the thought-flow is not yourself, it is not you who are thinking, but thought that is going on in the mind. It is Prakriti with its thought-energy that is raising all this whirl of thought in you, imposing it on the Purusha. You as the Purusha must stand back as the witness observing the action, but refusing to identify yourself with it. . . . If one becomes aware of the thoughts as coming from outside, from the universal Nature, then one can throw them out before they reach the mind; in that way the mind finally falls silent.

(S 23: 731-32)

*

Introspection: dividing oneself into a consciousness that observes and an energy that acts

Certainly, the mind and the inner being are consciousness. For human beings who have not got deeper into themselves, mind and consciousness are synonymous. Only when one becomes more aware of oneself by a growing consciousness, then one can see different degrees, kinds, powers of consciousness, mental, vital, physical, psychic, spiritual. The Divine has been described as Being, Consciousness, Ananda, even as a Consciousness (Chaitanya), as putting out a force or energy, Shakti that creates world. The mind is a modified consciousness that puts forth a mental energy. But the Divine can stand back from his energy and observe it at its work, it can be the Witness Purusha watching the works of Prakriti. Even the mind can do that — a man can stand back in his mind-consciousness and watch the mental energy doing things, thinking, planning, etc.; all introspection is based upon the fact that one can so divide oneself into a consciousness that observes and an energy that acts. These are quite elementary things supposed to be known to everybody. Anybody can do that merely by a little practice; anybody who observes his own thoughts, feelings, actions, has begun doing it already. In yoga we make the division complete, that is all.

(S 23: 686)

*

Rejecting the buzz of the physical mind and the vital suggestions

For the buzz of the physical mind, reject it quietly, without getting disturbed, till it feels discouraged and retires shaking its head and saying, “This fellow is too calm and strong for me.” There are always two things that can rise up and assail the silence, — vital suggestions, the physical mind’s mechanical recurrences. Calm rejection for both is the cure. There is a Purusha within who can dictate to the nature what it shall admit or exclude, but its will is a strong, quiet will; if one gets perturbed or agitated over the difficulties, then the will of the Purusha cannot act effectively as it would otherwise.

The dynamic realisation will probably take place when the higher consciousness comes fully down into the vital. When it comes into the mental it brings the peace of the Purusha and liberation and it may bring also knowledge. It is when it comes into the vital that the dynamic realisation becomes present and living.

(S 23: 733-34)

*

Removing the veil of the Ignorance

The ignorance, we see, is not in the secret soul, but in the apparent Prakriti; nor does it belong to the whole of that Prakriti, — it cannot, for Prakriti is the action of the All-conscient, — but arises in some development from its original integrality of light and power. . . .

It is to be noted also that in order to remove the veil of the Ignorance the conscious Force of being in us uses a reverse action of its power of exclusive concentration; it quiets the frontal movement of Prakriti in the individual consciousness and concentrates exclusively on the concealed inner being, — on the Self or on the true inner, psychic or mental or vital being, the Purusha, — to disclose it. But when it has done so, it need not remain in this opposite exclusiveness; it can resume its integral consciousness or a global consciousness which includes both being of Purusha and action of Prakriti, the soul and its instruments, the Self and the dynamisms of the Self-Power, *ātmaśakti*: it can then embrace its manifestation with a larger consciousness free from the previous limitation, free from the results of Nature’s forgetfulness of the indwelling Spirit. Or it may quiet the whole working it has manifested, concentrate on a higher level of Self and Nature, raise the being to it and bring down the powers of the higher level to transform the previous manifestation: all that is so transformed is still included, but as a part of the higher dynamism and its higher values, in a new and greater self-creation. This is what can happen when the Consciousness-Force in our being decides to raise its evolution from the mental to the supramental level.

(C 21: 613, 615)

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The calm which causes of disturbance cannot disturb

*X does not claim to know any sadhana but still to have an inner peace and joy.
It must be true, for I find X very happy and cheerful.*

Well, yes, many people are like that. Calm or peace or happiness or cheerfulness, so long as there is no cause for disturbance; but immediately there is, then boil, seethe, simmer, growl, howl, yowl. The calm which causes of disturbance cannot disturb is the thing.

(N: 754-55)

*

Self

He said, "I am egoless, spiritual, free,"
Then swore because his dinner was not ready.
I asked him why. He said, "It is not me,
But the belly's hungry god who gets unsteady."

I asked him why. He said, "It is his play.
I am unmoved within, desireless, pure.
I care not what may happen day by day."
I questioned him, "Are you so very sure?"

He answered, "I can understand your doubt.
But to be free is all. It does not matter
How you may kick and howl and rage and shout,
Making a row over your daily platter.

To be aware of self is liberty.
Self I have got and, having self, am free."

(C 2: 620)

*

Getting rid of desire

The rejection of desire is essentially the rejection of the element of craving, putting that out from the consciousness itself as a foreign element not belonging to the true self and the inner nature. But refusal to indulge the suggestions of desire is also a

part of the rejection; to abstain from the action suggested, if it is not the right action, must be included in the yogic discipline. It is only when this is done in the wrong way, by a mental ascetic principle or a hard moral rule, that it can be called suppression. The difference between suppression and an inward essential rejection is the difference between mental or moral control and a spiritual purification.

When one lives in the true consciousness one feels the desires outside oneself, entering from outside, from the universal lower Prakriti, into the mind and the vital parts. In the ordinary human condition this is not felt; men become aware of the desire only when it is there, when it has come inside and found a lodging or a habitual harbourage and so they think it is their own and a part of themselves. The first condition for getting rid of desire is, therefore, to become conscious with the true consciousness; for then it becomes much easier to dismiss it than when one has to struggle with it as if it were a constituent part of oneself to be thrown out from the being. It is easier to cast off an accretion than to excise what is felt as a parcel of our substance.

When the psychic being is in front, then also to get rid of desire becomes easy; for the psychic being has in itself no desires, it has only aspirations and a seeking and love for the Divine and all things that are or tend towards the Divine. The constant prominence of the psychic being tends of itself to bring out the true consciousness and set right almost automatically the movements of the nature.

(S 24: 1398-99)

*

Vital movements foreign to the true being

All the ordinary vital movements are foreign to the true being and come from outside; they do not belong to the soul nor do they originate in it but are waves from the general Nature, Prakriti.

The desires come from outside, enter the subconscious vital and rise to the surface. It is only when they rise to the surface and the mind becomes aware of them, that we become conscious of the desire. It seems to us to be our own because we feel it thus rising from the vital into the mind and do not know that it came from outside. What belongs to the vital, to the being, what makes it responsible is not the desire itself, but the habit of responding to the waves or the currents of suggestion that come into it from the universal Prakriti.

(S 24: 1397-98)

*

Vital, body and mind must obey the divine rule

Most men are, like animals, driven by the forces of Nature: whatever desires come, they fulfil them, whatever emotions come they allow them to play, whatever physical wants they have, they try to satisfy. We say then that the activities and feelings of men are controlled by their Prakriti, and mostly by the vital and physical nature. The body is the instrument of the Prakriti or Nature — it obeys its own nature or it obeys the vital forces of desire, passion, etc.

But man has also a mind and, as he develops, he learns to control his vital and physical nature by his reason and by his will. This control is very partial: for the reason is often deluded by vital desires and ignorance of the physical and it puts itself on their side and tries to justify by its ideas, reasonings or arguments their mistakes and wrong movements. Even if the reason keeps free and tells the vital or the body, “Do not do this”, yet the vital and the body often follow their own movement in spite of the prohibition — man’s mental will is not strong enough to compel them.

When people do sadhana, there is a higher Nature that works within, the psychic and spiritual, and they have to put their nature under the influence of the psychic being and the higher spiritual self or of the Divine. Not only the vital and the body but the mind also has to learn the Divine Truth and obey the divine rule. But because of the lower nature and its continued hold on them, they are unable at first and for a long time to prevent their nature from following the old ways — even when they know or are told from within what to do or what not to do. It is only by persistent sadhana, by getting into the higher spiritual consciousness and spiritual nature that this difficulty can be overcome; but even for the strongest and best sadhaks it takes a long time.

(S 24: 1395)

*

Aspiration and opening to the higher consciousness

. . . The reason why they [*experiences*] do not come in freely or stay is the activity of the mind and vital always rushing about, thinking this, wanting that, trying to perform mountaineering feats on all the hillocks of the lower nature instead of nourishing a strong and simple aspiration and opening to the higher consciousness that it may come in and do its work.

(S 24: 1171)

*

Truth consciousness can manifest only when ego and desire are overcome

The cosmic forces here whether good or bad are forces of the Ignorance. Above them is the Truth-Consciousness that can only manifest when ego and desire are overcome — it is the force from the Divine Truth-Consciousness that must descend; the higher Peace, Light, Knowledge, Purity, Ananda must work upon the cosmic forces in the individual so as to change them and substitute the Truth-Force in place of the ordinary working.

(S 23: 1082)

*

Detachment is a beginning

Detachment is the beginning of mastery, but for complete mastery there should be no reactions at all. When there is something within undisturbed by the reactions that means the inner being is free and master of itself, but it is not yet master of the whole nature. When it is master, it allows no wrong reactions — if any come they are at once repelled and shaken off, and finally none come at all.

(S 23: 1012)

*

. . . The question is whether Buddhi can help you to detach yourself from your nature and lead you to the perception of something higher than itself.

I think the text of the Gita supports this role of the Buddhi.

I should think so. Otherwise what is the meaning of the Gita laying so much stress on Buddhi? Buddhi helps you to detach yourself and prepares you for the higher perception of the Purusha. . . .

(E: 712)

*

The Divine does not compel people to do anything

It is Prakriti or Nature that acts; the Divine does not compel people to do anything. Nothing can happen without the presence and support of the Divine, for Nature or Prakriti is the Divine Force and it is this that works out things, but it works them out according to the nature and through or with the will of each man which is full of

ignorance — that goes on until men turn to the Divine and become conscious of Him and united with Him. Then only can it be said that all begins to be done in him by the direct Will of the Divine.

(S 24: 1386)

*

Our wills merely set the force in motion

The force “created” is not yours — it is Prakriti’s — your will sets it in motion, it does not really create it; but once set in motion, it tends to fulfil itself so far as the play of other forces will allow it. So, naturally, if you want to stop it, you have to set a contrary force in motion which will be strong enough to prevail against its momentum.

(S 23: 1081)

*

Need of a firm choice

You cannot “begin” again; it would be too difficult a thing in this confusion. You have to get back to the point at which you deviated. If you can get back to the Peace that was coming and with it aspire to the freedom and wideness of the Purusha consciousness forming a *point d'appui* of detachment and separation from all this confusion of the subconscious Prakriti, then you will have a firm ground to stand upon and proceed. But for that you must make your choice firmly and refuse to be upset at every moment and diverted from it.

(S 24: 1598)

*

It is for you to choose

It is Prakriti (Nature) that sends these impulses. Nature sends all kinds of forces and experiences to each. It is for you as a conscious being (Purusha) to choose whether you shall do or not do; you should reject what you see to be wrong, accept only what is true and right. In Nature there is the higher and the lower, the true and the false. What the Divine wants of you is that you should grow in the Truth and the higher Nature, reject the false and the lower Nature.

(S 22: 318)

*

Rejection of all the defects of the nature

. . . The yogin should look on all the defects of the nature as movements of the lower Prakriti common to all and reject them calmly, firmly and persistently with full confidence in the Divine Power — without weakness or depression or negligence and without excitement, impatience or violence.

(S 24: 1733)

*

An “I” which is not an “I”

The essential “I” sense disappears when there is the stable realisation of the one universal Self in all and that remains at all moments in all conditions under any circumstances. Usually this comes first in the Purusha consciousness and the extension to the Prakriti movements is not immediate. But even if there are “I” movements in the Prakriti reactions, the Purusha within observes them as the continued running of an old mechanism and does not feel them as his own. Most Vedantists stop there, because they do think that those reactions will fall away from one at death and all will disappear into the One. But for a change of the nature it is necessary that the experience and seeing of the Purusha should spread to all the parts, mind, vital, physical, subconscious. Then the ego movements of Prakriti can also disappear gradually from one field after another till none is left. For this a perfect *samatā* even in the cells of the body and in every vibration of the being is necessary — *sama hi brahma*. One is then quite free from it in works also. The individual remains but that is not the small separative ego, but a form and power of the Universal which feels itself one with all beings, an acting centre and instrument of the Universal Transcendent, full of the Ananda of the presence and the action but not thinking or moving independently or acting for its own sake. That cannot be called egoism. The Divine can be called an ego only if he is a separate Person limited as in the Christian idea of God by his separateness (though even there esoteric Christianity abolishes the limitation). An I which is not separate in that way is no I at all.

(S 22: 56)

*

Rejection and psychic control

Without persistent rejection it [liberation from the ego] cannot be done. Going up into the Self liberates the higher parts, but the ego remains in the lower parts. The most effective force for this liberation is the psychic control along with steady rejection.

(S 24: 1378)

*

Attachment is attachment — in whatever part of the nature it may be

If ego and desire are different things from the gunas, then there can be an action of the gunas without ego and desire and therefore without attachment. That is the nature of the action of these gunas in the unattached liberated yogi. If it were not possible, then it would be nonsense to talk of the yogis being unattached, for there would remain still attachment in part of their being. To say that they are unattached in the Purusha, but attached in the Prakriti, therefore they are unattached, is to talk nonsense. Attachment is attachment in whatever part of the being it may be. In order to be unattached one must be unattached everywhere, in the mental, vital, physical action and not only in the silent soul somewhere inside.

(S 23: 683-84)

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The sattwa predominates, the rajasa acts as a kinetic movement under the control of sattwa until the tamasa imposes the need of rest. That is the usual thing [in the liberated state]. But even if the tamasa predominates and the action is weak or the rajasa predominates and the action is excessive, neither the Purusha nor the Prakriti get disturbed, there is a fundamental calm in the whole being and the action is no more than a ripple or an eddy on the surface.

(S 23: 685)

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To be free of responsibility one must get rid of the ego

To get free of responsibility you must get rid of the ego, that is to say, of the mental and vital and other personalities. It is they who feel the responsibility and bear the consequences.

Can one be free if one acts without feeling responsibility?

You can't get rid of responsibility like that. Even though you may say you are not responsible, you will feel internally that you are responsible.

You must become free if you want to be free from responsibility. There are three ways, or rather several ways, of attaining that freedom. One is by the separation of Purusha from Prakriti and realising it as free from it. Another is by realising the Self, the Atman or the Spirit, free from the cosmic movement. A third is by the identification with the Transcendent — by realising the Paramatman. You can also have this freedom by merging into the Shunyam through the Buddhistic discipline.

In the experience of the first two methods does the Purusha remain the witness?

Not necessarily. It may be a witness in the first method because the Purusha separates himself from Prakriti and is then the witness not taking part in her action.

But in the second — the realisation of the Self — the Purusha need not be the witness of the universe, or the universal movement. The Self may remain ingathered without witnessing anything. There are many conditions into which the spirit can pass.

A certain kind of Nirvana is necessary even for our Yoga. That is to say, the world must become, in a way, nothing to you, because as it is constituted it is the work of Ignorance. Then only can you enter into and bring into existence the true creation, the world of Truth or Light here.

(E: 667)

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The first step

The fact that you are conscious about the ego makes half the cure. Is it not so?

Not necessarily. But it is the first step.

And what is the second?

To detach oneself from all these things. To think as if all these things belong to the outer being, or someone else. As one goes on doing this the Purusha gradually withdraws its sanction from the Prakriti and Prakriti loosens its hold over nature till a spiritual control takes place. But if one associates oneself with the Prakriti then the Purusha becomes a slave to it. Rejection, of course, is the stronger way. One has to reject these things before they enter, as I did the thoughts. It is more powerful and the result also is quick.

(E: 548)

*

This is a Yoga of rising into the divine nature from the lower nature. What that higher nature is you will understand afterwards. You have to become fit for it. You can now see your lower nature, especially the vital play of Kama (lust) and Krodha (anger) etc., is essentially the functioning of the animal-man. You have to rise into the divine nature by rejecting the lower nature. How can you get the divine nature unless you conquer the nature of the animal-man in you? The first step has been given to you: you must learn to separate yourself as the Purusha, and look unmoved at all the play of Nature in you. You must externalise the play and see all its actions as outside yourself. You ought not to allow any mental justification for the play of the lower forces of the vital being. The Shuddhi — purification — necessary in this Yoga cannot be attained with the forces of lust and anger and there is no question of harbouring them.

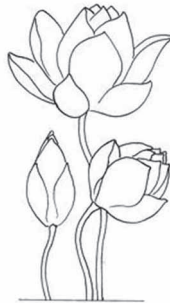
(E: 133-34)

*

Constant rejection and remoulding

The sense of ego can disappear into that of the Self or the Purusha but that of itself does not bring about the disappearance of the old ego-reactions in the Prakriti. The Purusha has to get rid of these by a process of constant rejection and remoulding. The remoulding consists in throwing everything into a consecration to the Mother and doing all for her without regard to oneself, one's desires, opinions, vital reactions as if they were the things to be fulfilled. This is most easily done if the psychic being becomes quite awake.

(S 24: 1378)



SEPARATION OF PURUSHA AND PRAKRITI

Separation of mental Purusha from Prakriti

It is always possible to have realisations of a kind on the mental-spiritual plane even if the vital is still impure. There is a sort of separation of the mental Purusha and Prakriti which results in a knowledge that has no transforming effect on the life. But the theory of these yogis is that one has to know the Self; life and what one does in life do not matter. . . .

(S 23: 506-07)

*

Detaching oneself from the movement of Nature

What you know generally as your self is only the surface being and its superficial workings. What man thinks to be *himself* is only a movement in Nature, — a movement in the universal Mind, universal Life and universal Matter. What you have to do is to separate, or rather detach, yourself from the movements of nature. You will then find that you are not only watching the universal action of Nature but consenting to it.

The movement of watching what is going on in you is not the separation of the true Purusha, but the mental Purusha. As the Purusha you can not only watch as the Sakshi, but act as the giver of sanction, Anumanta. You can stop the movement of Nature that is going on in you.

. . . You have not to suppress the natural movement. That would only mean that it would remain there, or would go deeper in your nature and then rear its head again at some convenient opportunity. What you have to do is to reject the movement, to cast it out of your nature. You can do that by detaching yourself more and more from all movements.

Where is the seat of the Purusha?

Above the head is the true seat of the Purusha.

. . . When you separate the Purusha from Prakriti you experience a certain calm. That calm is the Purusha consciousness watching the action of Prakriti. It is what is called the Silent Witness. The calm deepens as you detach yourself more and more from Prakriti. You also feel that it is wide, that it is the Lord. It can stop

any movement of nature though its will may not be all at once effective; after a time it must prevail. In order to find this Purusha consciousness you have to reject everything in the lower nature, i.e., desires, feelings and mental ideas.

(E: 39-40)

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Developing the power of looking within

In order to distinguish the work intended by the Shakti and that dictated by the lower nature you have to be very careful. You must develop the power of looking within. When you look within you must first realise yourself as the Purusha, that is to say, the being quite separate from the movements of Prakriti, Nature, going on in the Prana (the vital parts), the Chitta, the Mind etc. Any movement that arises in Prakriti has to be rejected and anything that comes from Above has to be accepted. Not only must you separate yourself, but the Purusha must become the calm and passive witness. Thus there will be a portion in yourself which will be quiet, unaffected by anything in Prakriti. The calm of the Sakshi, witness, then extends to the nature and then nature remains quite unmoved by any disturbance. You can not merely remain unmoved but also, as Anumanta, give the sanction to certain movements of nature and withhold it from others.

(E: 34)

*

Socrates and the daemon

In the case of Socrates and that of the habitual drunkard raised by you, the difference you make is correct. The weak-willed man is governed by his vital and physical impulses, his mental being is not dynamic enough to make its will prevail over them. His will is not “free” because it is not strong enough to be free, it is the slave of the forces that act on or in his vital and physical nature. In the case of Socrates the will is so far free that it stands above the play of these forces and he determines by his mental idea and resolve what he shall or shall not do. The question remains whether the will of Socrates is only free in this sense, itself being actually determined by something larger than the mentality of Socrates, something of which it is the instrument — whether the Universal Force or a Being in him of which his daemon was the voice and which not only gave his mind that decisive awareness of the mental ideal but imposed on it the drive to act in obedience to the awareness. Or it may be subject to a nexus between the inner Purusha and the Universal Force. In the latter case there would be an unstable balance between the determinism of Nature

and a self-determination from within. If we start from the Sankhya view of things, that being (viz., the one of which his daemon was the voice) would be the soul or Purusha and both in the strong-willed Socrates and in the weak-willed slave of vital impulse, the action and its results would be determined by the assent or refusal of the Purusha. In the latter the Purusha gives its assent to and undergoes the play of the forces of Nature, the habit of the vital impulse, through a vital submission while the mind looks on helpless. In Socrates the Purusha has begun to emancipate itself and decide what it shall accept or shall not accept — the conscious being has begun to impose itself on the forces that act on it. This mastery has become so complete that he can largely determine his own actions and can even within certain limits not only forecast but fix the results — so that what he wants shall happen sooner or later.

As for the Superman, that is the conscious being whose emancipation is complete by his rising to a station beyond the limits of mind. He can determine his action in complete accord with an awareness which perceives all the forces acting in and on and around him and is able, instead of undergoing, to use them and even to determine.

(S 22: 473-74)

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Purusha as *sākṣī* or *anumantā*

. . . When one begins Yoga, naturally, all the forces on the mental, and especially on the vital plane, that are hostile to the Siddhi of this Yoga, are bound to rise and one must be active in rejecting them — what the Gita calls *apramatta* — because the Purusha is not only *sākṣī* but *anumantā*, one who gives consent. This activity of rejection must be always there. Even if you fall you must rise up again and again and fight.

(E: 135)

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Value of the witness attitude

The witness attitude is not meant as a convenient means for disowning the responsibility of one's defects and thereby refusing to mend them. It is meant for self-knowledge and, in our yoga, as a convenient station (detached and uninvolved, therefore not subject to Prakriti) from which one can act on the wrong movements by refusal of assent and by substituting for them the action of the true consciousness from within or above.

(S 23: 1010-11)

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The Mother's Grace and the Purusha

Is it the Purusha who consents to the action of the Mother's Grace in the whole being?

Yes.

If the Purusha does not give consent, does it mean that the other beings also cannot come to the front to enable the Sadhak to receive the Mother's Grace?

No. The Purusha often holds back and lets the other beings consent or reject in his place.

When the Mother's Grace comes down to the Sadhak, is it by the consent of the Purusha?

What do you mean "by the consent"? The Mother's Grace comes down by the Mother's will. The Purusha can accept or reject the Grace.

(S 25: 125-26)

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Not only machinery but a Spirit

. . . But all is not Law and Process, there is also Being and Consciousness; there is not only a machinery but a Spirit in things, not only Nature and law of cosmos but a cosmic Spirit, not only a process of mind and life and body but a soul in the natural creature. If it were not so, there could be no rebirth of a soul and no field for a law of Karma. But if the fundamental truth of our being is spiritual and not mechanical, it must be ourself, our soul that fundamentally determines its own evolution, and the law of Karma can only be one of the processes it uses for that purpose: our Spirit, our Self must be greater than its Karma. There is Law, but there is also spiritual freedom. Law and Process are one side of our existence and their reign is over our outer mind, life and body, for these are mostly subject to the mechanism of Nature. But even here their mechanical power is absolute only over body and matter; for Law becomes more complex and less rigid, Process more plastic and less mechanical when there comes in the phenomenon of life, and yet more is this so when mind intervenes with its subtlety; an inner freedom already begins to intervene and, the more we go within, the soul's power of choice is increasingly felt: for Prakriti is the field of law and process, but the soul, the Purusha, is the giver of the sanction, *anumantā*, and even if ordinarily it chooses to remain a

witness and concede an automatic sanction, it can be, if it wills, the master of its nature, Ishwara.

(C 22: 839-40)

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Mental work and sadhana

It is not so easy to do mental work and do sadhana at the same time, for it is with the mind that the sadhana is done. If one gets back from the mind as well as the body and lives in the inner Purusha consciousness then it is possible.

(S 24: 1275-76)

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Separating oneself from the mental consciousness

That only means that you cannot separate yourself from your mental consciousness in its activity. Naturally, if you take your mental consciousness off the reading, you can't understand what is being read, for it is with the mental consciousness that one understands. You have not to make the mental consciousness separate from the reading, but yourself separate from the mental consciousness. You have to be the Witness watching it reading or writing or talking, just as you watch the body acting or moving.

(S 24: 1276)

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Taking the self-seeing posture

... What the Mother spoke of was not analysis, but a seeing of oneself and of all the living movements of the being and the nature, a vivid observation of the personalities and forces that move on the stage of our being, their motives, their impulses, their potentialities, an observation quite as interesting as the seeing and understanding of a drama or a novel, a living vision and perception of how things are done in us, which brings also a living mastery over this inner universe. Such things become dry only when one deals with them with the analytic and ratiocinative mind, not when one deals with them thus seeingly and intuitively as a movement of life. If you had that observation (from the inner spiritual, not the outer intellectual and ethical viewpoint), then it would be comparatively easy for you to get out of your difficulties; for instance, you would find at once where this irrational impulse to flee away came

from and it would not have any hold upon you. Of course, all that can be done to the best effect when you stand back from the play of your nature and become the Witness-Control or the Spectator-Actor-Manager. But that is what happens when you take this kind of self-seeing posture.

(S 24: 1694-95)

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Separating oneself from the movements of Prakriti

. . . The one thing to do is to separate oneself from these movements [*like sexual desire*], to find one's inner self and live in it; these movements will not then any longer appear as belonging to oneself but as surface impositions of the outer Prakriti upon the inner self or Purusha. They can then be more easily discarded or brought to nothing.

(S 24: 1537)

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Half the trouble is over if the separate being within can be felt

These things rise because either they are there in the conscious part of the being as habits of the nature or they are there lying concealed and able to rise at any moment or they are suggestions from the general or universal Nature outside to which the personal being makes a response. In any case they rise in order that they may be met and cast out and finally rejected so that they may trouble the nature no longer. The amount of trouble they give depends on the way they are met. The first principle is to detach oneself from them, not to identify, not to admit them any longer as part of one's real nature but to look on them as things imposed to which one says "This is not I or mine — this is a thing I reject altogether". One begins to feel a part of the being inside which is not identified, which remains firm and says "This may give trouble on the surface, but it shall not touch me". If this separate being within can be felt, then half the trouble is over — provided there is a will there not only to separate but to get rid of the imperfection from the surface nature also.

(S 24: 1693)

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Separation of Purusha from Prakriti

The first step in Karmayoga of this kind is to diminish and finally get rid of the ego-centric position in works, the lower vital reactions and the principle of desire. He must certainly go on on this road until he reaches something like its end. I would not wish to deflect him from that in any way.

What I had in view when I spoke of a systematic sadhana was the adoption of a method which would generalise the whole attitude of the consciousness so as to embrace all its movements at a time instead of working only upon details — although that working is always necessary. I may cite as an example the practice of the separation of the Prakriti and the Purusha, the conscious Being standing back detached from all the movements of Nature and observing them as witness and knower and finally as the giver (or refuser) of the sanction and at the highest stage of the development, the Ishwara, the pure will, master of the whole Nature.

By intensive sadhana I meant the endeavour to arrive at one of the great positive realisations which would be a firm base for the whole movement. I observe that he speaks of sometimes getting a glimpse of some wide calm. . . . A descent of this wide calm permanently into the consciousness is one of the realisations of which I was thinking. That he feels it at such times seems to indicate that he may have the capacity of receiving and retaining it. If that happened or if the Prakriti-Purusha realisation came, the whole sadhana would proceed on a strong permanent base with a new and entirely yogic consciousness instead of the purely mental endeavour which is always difficult and slow.

(S 23: 673)

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The only way is to separate the Prakriti and Purusha. When you feel something within watching all the mental activities but separate from them, just as you can watch things going on outside in the street, then that is the separation of Purusha from mental Prakriti.

(S 24: 1276)

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There is also the separation of Purusha from Prakriti till one becomes the witness only and feels separate from all the activities as the Witness Consciousness.

(S 23: 733)

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Prakriti separating from surface action

It is more difficult for the Prakriti [to separate from surface action than for the Purusha] as its ordinary play is that of the surface being. It has to divide itself into two to separate from that. The Purusha, on the contrary, is in its nature silent and separate — so it has only to go back to its original nature.

(S 23: 685)

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The very powerful method of Sankhya

There is also the method — a very powerful method — of the Sankhyas, the separation of the Purusha and the Prakriti. One enforces on the mind the position of the Witness — all action of mind, vital, physical becomes an outer play which is not myself or mine, but belongs to Nature and has been enforced on an outer me. I am the witness Purusha; I am silent, detached, not bound by any of these things. There grows up in consequence a division in the being; the sadhak feels within him the growth of a calm silent separate consciousness which feels itself quite apart from the surface play of the mind and the vital and physical Nature. Usually when this takes place, it is possible very rapidly to bring down the peace of the higher consciousness and the action of the higher Force and the full march of the yoga. But often the Force itself comes down first in response to the concentration and call and then, if these things are necessary, it does them and uses any other means or process that is helpful or indispensable.

(S 24: 1168-69)

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Separation of Purusha from Prakriti as preparation for Yoga

. . . My giving him the Yoga at present is out of the question. If he wants to prepare himself he can practise the separation of Purusha and Prakriti.

(E: 45)

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The first liberation: separation from the surface consciousness

The condition you had of the inner being and its silence, separated from the surface consciousness and its little restless workings, is the first liberation, the liberation of Purusha from Prakriti and it is the fundamental experience. The day when you can keep it, you can know that the yogic consciousness has been founded in you. This time it has increased in intensity, but it must also increase in duration.

(S 24: 1171)

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Real liberation comes when the Purusha awakes and feels himself separate from Nature, not bound by it but free and lord.

But generally the Purusha is bound.

Of course. Usually the Purusha consents to the action of Prakriti but he can withdraw his consent and stand apart. He can be free by getting out of evolution, by being free from the working of ego and nature-personalities.

When the freedom of the Purusha is won then it becomes possible for the individual to look beyond the Cosmic Spirit to the Transcendent and act in the Cosmos according to the will of the Transcendent — is it so?

Yes. Instead of being an instrument of ignorant nature you become the instrument of the Divine.

(E: 665)

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Separation of Purusha and Prakriti during meditation

In the meditation I felt that something descended, and the body became silent, i.e. it seemed to me that it was something apart from me. Along with this the inner silence began.

The real self (Atman or Purusha) is not the body — the body is something separate, a part of the being, but a part of Prakriti, not the true self or Purusha.

I also tried to imagine your presence before me, but the appearance soon became obliterated into a nothingness, so to say. But is it harmful to test the experience as I did? Should I have remained absolutely silent and calm?

It is best to remain silent. To test the experience may lead to a mental activity which will break it. That it did not do so in this case, shows that the power of silence that came down must have been very strong and imperative.

You said before that this condition was of the inner being and its silence, the separation of Purusha from Prakriti.

Yes, but it seems also to be the beginning of liberation from identification with the body consciousness. That easily comes with the Purusha-consciousness in the inner being.

Is this inner being or the Purusha the same as the psychic being?

No, not necessarily — the inner being is composed of the inner mental, the inner vital, the inner physical. The psychic is the inmost supporting all the others. Usually it is in the inner mental that this separation first happens and it is the inner mental Purusha who remains silent, observing the Prakriti as separate from himself. But it may also be the inner vital Purusha or inner physical or else without location simply the whole Purusha-consciousness separate from the whole Prakriti. Sometimes it is felt above the head — but then it is usually spoken of as the Atman and the realisation is that of the silent Self.

(N: 81-82)

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Liberation not a facile matter

You can certainly go on developing the consciousness of the Witness Purusha above, but if it is only a witness and the lower Prakriti is allowed to have its own way, there would be no reason why these conditions should ever stop. Many take that attitude — that the Purusha has to liberate itself by standing apart, and the Prakriti can be allowed to go on till the end of the life doing its own business — is *prārabdha karma*; when the body falls away, the Prakriti will drop also and the Purusha go off into the featureless Brahman! This is a comfortable theory, but of more than doubtful truth; I don't think liberation is so simple and facile a matter as that. In any case, the transformation which is the object of our yoga would not take place.

The Purusha above is not only a Witness, he is the giver (or withholder) of the sanction; if he persistently refuses the sanction to a movement of Prakriti, keeping himself detached, then, even if it goes on for a time by its past momentum, it usually loses its hold after a time, becomes more feeble, less persistent, less concrete and in the end fades away. If you take the Purusha consciousness, it should be not only as

the Witness but as the Anumanta, refusing sanction to the disturbing movements, sanctioning only peace, calm, purity and whatever else is part of the divine nature. This refusal of sanction need not mean a struggle with the lower Prakriti; it should be a quiet, persistent, detached refusal leaving unsupported, unassented to, without meaning or justification, the contrary action of the nature.

(S 23: 1008-09)

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Keeping the witness attitude

What he wants to know is whether the literary work he is doing with the approval of the Mother is not going to interrupt the silence, especially if he goes in for controversy.

I suppose one can do the work in silence. But he should not engage in controversy. He has too combative a mind. If he goes in for controversy naturally the silence will be interrupted.

If he does this sort of work and somebody contradicts him, naturally he will have to counter-contradict.

Why? Many people criticise me. I don't answer. It is not necessary that he should answer.

Nolini and I decided not to try to convert anyone about Vedic interpretation but to go on repeating over and over again our point.

That is Hitler's method.

That is why nobody contradicts Nolini!

Yes. When people find that the opponent does not answer they lose all interest.

X says it is true that he has lost touch with the reality of the external world. Now if he reads Manchester Guardian and New Statesman will it disturb his silence?

It depends on his mind. If he can read all these things in order to know what is going on, it is all right, but he should not run away with any idea or programme. He was asked not to read papers because his mind was a slave to politics and attracted by

the ideas. The fundamental peace and silence is all right, but he should bring the attitude of the Purusha in his reading also.

. . . You can tell him that he must not attack or contradict people. When he reads anything he must not allow his mind to run away with any ideas, but take up the attitude of the witness and see from where these things come. And if he does not allow the mind to identify with any of them he will know the right source of action and knowledge. . . .

(E: 729-30)

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I am sorry I was the cause of Y's "terrible upsets". It is because he made some contemptuous remarks about me and Z regarding our feast. Both of us attacked him in the D.R., indirectly, which made him very furious.

Why attach any importance? If one gets angry at other people's criticisms, one would need to be angry all the time — for all the time there is criticism going on.

(N: 216-17)

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You simply say "the difficulty is there"! I wonder if anyone else here had to work under such a condition . . . To "detach" — isn't it something Herculean for me?

Well, but it is not individual to you. Everyone has to do that with his difficulties. Detach means that the Witness in oneself has to stand back and refuse to look on the movement as his own (the soul's own) and look on it as a habit of past nature or an invasion of general Nature. Then to deal with it as such. It may seem difficult, but it comes perfectly well by trying persistently.

(N: 658)



BEYOND SEPARATION

Beyond the separation

In order to get the dynamic realisation it is not enough to rescue the Purusha from subjection to Prakriti; one must transfer the allegiance of the Purusha from the lower Prakriti with its play of ignorant Forces to the Supreme Divine Shakti, the Mother.

(S 22: 286)

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Liberation of Prakriti

When Prakriti is liberated it divides itself into an inner Force that is free from its action (free from rajas, tamas, etc.) and the outer Prakriti which it is using and changing.

(S 23: 685)

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Constant experience of the Purusha

The peace that you feel in the mind must be constant and permanent and you should feel yourself separate from all the thoughts, ideas and suggestions that may pass through your mind. That is to say, you should have the constant experience of the Purusha consciousness. This basis of peace must be there whether you are meditating or not.

(E: 57)

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The true yogic consciousness

It is the true yogic consciousness in which one feels the oneness and lives in it, not touched by the outer being and its inferior movements, but looking on them with a smile at their ignorance and smallness. It will become much more possible to deal with these outer things if that separateness is maintained always.

(S 23: 1079)

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First descent of the Power of the Mother

. . . The realisation of the Purusha consciousness calm, free, observing the play of forces but not attached or involved in them is a means of liberation. The calm, the detachment, a peaceful strength and joy (*ātmaraṭi*) must be brought down into the vital and physical as well as into the mind. If this is established, one is no longer a prey to the turmoil of the vital forces. But this calm, peace, silent strength and joy is only the first descent of the Power of the Mother into the adhar. Beyond that is a Knowledge, an executive Power, a dynamic Ananda which is not that of the ordinary Prakriti even at its best and most sattwic, but Divine in its nature.

First, however, the calm, the peace, the liberation is needed. To try to bring down the dynamic side too soon is not advisable, for then it would be a descent into a troubled and impure nature unable to assimilate it and serious perturbations might be the consequence.

(S 22: 287)

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Purusha is Nitya Shuddha

. . . But what I call essential purity can be attained by making the basis of peace firm and establishing the whole consciousness in the Purusha firmly. When one is firmly established in the Purusha consciousness then one has also got a basis for purity because the Purusha is ever-pure, Nitya Shuddha; he does not require purity, he is inherently pure. Afterwards the purity that remains to be established is that of Prakriti. Once one is established in the Purusha consciousness the Prakriti automatically begins to get purified.

(E: 57-58)

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The impersonal Self and beyond

When one follows after the impersonal Self, one is moving between two opposite principles — the silence and purity of the impersonal inactive Atman and the activity of the ignorant Prakriti. One can pass into the Self, leaving the ignorant nature or reducing it to silence. Or else, one can live in the peace and freedom of the Self and watch the action of Nature as a witness. Even one may put some sattwic control, by *tapasya*, over the action of the Prakriti; but the impersonal Self has no power to change or divinise the nature. For that one has to go beyond the impersonal Self and seek after the Divine who is both personal and impersonal and beyond these two

aspects. If, however, you practise living in the impersonal Self and can achieve a certain spiritual impersonality, then you grow in equality, purity, peace, detachment, you get the power of living in an inner freedom not touched by the surface movement or struggle of the mental, vital and physical nature, and this becomes a great help when you have to go beyond the impersonal and to change the troubled nature also into something divine.

(S 23: 1009-10)

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The Self is everywhere and can be known everywhere

I do not dispute at all the fact that one can realise the Self, the Brahman or the Ishwara without going into the overhead regions, the dynamic spiritual planes, or stationing oneself permanently above the body as happens in this yoga. . . . one can very well, as you say, realise the Atman if one stands back from the mind and heart, detaches oneself from the parts of Prakriti, ceases to identify oneself with mind, life and body, falls into an inner silence. One need not even explore the kingdoms of the inner mind or inner vital, still less is it compulsory to spread one's wings in ranges above. The Self is everywhere and by entering into full detachment and silence, or even by either detachment or silence, one can get anywhere some glimpse, some reflection, perhaps even a full reflection, or a sense of the Self's presence or of one's own immergence in that which is free, wide, silent, eternal, infinite. . . .

(S 22: 271-72)

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Various positions of the mental Purusha

The truth is that the mental Purusha can take up any number of positions towards the ultimate Reality and in each position find a certain truth which is as absolute as the truths of the others. Each is thus complete, final. There is, for instance, a plane of Ananda which is self-existent; you remain in that state, you don't care whether the house is falling or your head is breaking, or what is happening to your friends.

(E: 335-36)

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Need to realise the Self before rising into the higher Prakriti

And how is the outer nature to rise into the higher Prakriti before you realise the Self? The higher nature is that of the higher consciousness of which the first basis is the peace and wideness and realisation of the Self, the One that is all.

(S 24: 1129-30)

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Attitude of the witness consciousness

The attitude of the witness consciousness within — I do not think it necessarily involves an external seclusion, though one may do that also — is a very necessary stage in the progress. It helps the liberation from the lower Prakriti — not getting involved in the ordinary nature movements; it helps the establishment of a perfect calm and peace within, for there is then one part of the being which remains detached and sees without being disturbed the perturbations of the surface; it helps also the ascent into the higher consciousness and the descent of the higher consciousness, for it is through this calm, detached and liberated inner being that the ascent and descent can easily be done. Also, to have the same witness look on the movements of Prakriti in others, seeing, understanding but not perturbed by them in any way is a very great help towards both the liberation and the universalisation of the being. I could not therefore possibly object to this movement in a sadhak.

(S 23: 1006-07)

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Replacing the play of forces by the government of the Divine

The universal forces move by their own force and the consciousness within them — but there is also the Cosmic Spirit who supports them and determines by his onlook and disposing will their play — although the direct action is left to the forces — it is the play of universal Prakriti with the universal Purusha watching behind it. In the individual also there is the individual Purusha who can, if he wills, not merely assent to the play of Prakriti, but accept or reject or will for its change. All that is in the play itself as we see it here. There is something above — but the action of that is an intervention rather than a moment to moment control; it can become a constant direct control only when one replaces the play of the forces by the government of the Divine.

(S 23: 1079)

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The spectator and the coils of the dragon

As for the spectator and the coils of the dragon, it is the Chino-Japanese image for the world-force extending itself in the course of the universe and this expresses the attitude of the witness seeing it all and observing in its unfolding the unrolling of the play of the Divine Lila. It is this attitude that gives the greatest calm, peace, *samatā* in face of the riddle of the cosmic workings. It is not meant that action and movement are not accepted but they are accepted as the Divine Working which is leading to ends which the mind may not always see at once, but the soul divines through all the supreme purpose and the hidden guidance.

Of course, there is afterwards an experience in which the two sides of the Divine Whole, the Witness and the Player, blend together; but this poise of the spectator comes first and leads to that fuller experience. It gives the balance, the calm, the increasing understanding of soul and life and their deeper significances without which the full supramental experience cannot come.

(S 23: 1078-79)

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Our unity with the world-being

But what is this strongly separative self-experience that we call ego? It is nothing fundamentally real in itself but only a practical construction of our consciousness devised to centralise the activities of Nature in us. We perceive a formation of mental, physical, vital experience which distinguishes itself from the rest of being, and that is what we think of as ourselves in nature — this individualisation of being in becoming. We then proceed to conceive of ourselves as something which has thus individualised itself and only exists so long as it is individualised, — a temporary or at least a temporal becoming; or else we conceive of ourselves as someone who supports or causes the individualisation, an immortal being perhaps but limited by its individuality. This perception and this conception constitute our ego-sense. Normally, we go no farther in our knowledge of our individual existence.

But in the end we have to see that our individualisation is only a superficial formation, a practical selection and limited conscious synthesis for the temporary utility of life in a particular body, or else it is a constantly changing and developing synthesis pursued through successive lives in successive bodies. Behind it there is a consciousness, a Purusha, who is not determined or limited by his individualisation or by this synthesis but on the contrary determines, supports and yet exceeds it. That which he selects from in order to construct this synthesis, is his total experience of the world-being. Therefore our individualisation exists by virtue of the world-being, but also by virtue of a consciousness which uses the world-being for experience

of its possibilities of individuality. These two powers, Person and his world-material, are both necessary for our present experience of individuality. If the Purusha with his individualising synthesis of consciousness were to disappear, to merge, to annul himself in any way, our constructed individuality would cease because the Reality that supported it would no longer be in presence; if, on the other hand, the world-being were to dissolve, merge, disappear, then also our individualisation would cease, for the material of experience by which it effectuates itself would be wanting. We have then to recognise these two terms of our existence, a world-being and an individualising consciousness which is the cause of all our self-experience and world-experience.

But we see farther that in the end this Purusha, this cause and self of our individuality, comes to embrace the whole world and all other beings in a sort of conscious extension of itself and to perceive itself as one with the world-being. In its conscious extension of itself it exceeds the primary experience and abolishes the barriers of its active self-limitation and individualisation; by its perception of its own infinite universality it goes beyond all consciousness of separative individuality or limited soul-being. By that very fact the individual ceases to be the self-limiting ego; in other words, our false consciousness of existing only by self-limitation, by rigid distinction of ourselves from the rest of being and becoming is transcended; our identification of ourselves with our personal and temporal individualisation in a particular mind and body is abolished. But is all truth of individuality and individualisation abolished? does the Purusha cease to exist or does he become the world-Purusha and live intimately in innumerable minds and bodies? We do not find it to be so. He still individualises and it is still he who exists and embraces this wider consciousness while he individualises: but the mind no longer thinks of a limited temporary individualisation as all ourselves but only as a wave of becoming thrown up from the sea of its being or else as a form or centre of universality. The soul still makes the world-becoming the material for individual experience, but instead of regarding it as something outside and larger than itself on which it has to draw, by which it is affected, with which it has to make accommodations, it is aware of it subjectively as within itself; it embraces both its world-material and its individualised experience of spatial and temporal activities in a free and enlarged consciousness. In this new consciousness the spiritual individual perceives its true self to be one in being with the Transcendence and seated and dwelling within it, and no longer takes its constructed individuality as anything more than a formation for world-experience.

Our unity with the world-being is the consciousness of a Self which at one and the same time cosmicises in the world and individualises through the individual Purusha, and both in that world-being and in this individual being and in all individual beings it is aware of the same Self manifesting and experiencing its various manifestations. That then is a Self which must be one in its being, — otherwise we could not

have this experience of unity, — and yet must be capable in its very unity of cosmic differentiation and multiple individuality.

(C 21: 382-84)

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Powerful individualisation and survival beyond death

What our normal demand of survival asks for is a . . . survival for our mind, our life, even our body; the dogma of the resurrection of the body attests to this last demand, — even as it has been the root of the age-long effort of man to discover the elixir of immortality or any means magical, alchemic or scientific to conquer physically the death of the body. But this aspiration could only succeed if the mind, life or body could put on something of the immortality and divinity of the indwelling spirit. There are certain circumstances in which the survival of the outer mental personality representative of the inner mental Purusha could be possible. It could happen if our mental being came to be so powerfully individualised on the surface and so much one with the inner mind and inner mental Purusha and at the same time so open plastically to the progressive action of the Infinite that the soul no longer needed to dissolve the old form of mind and create a new one in order to progress. A similar individualisation, integration and openness of the vital being on the surface would alone make possible a similar survival of the life-part in us, the outer vital personality representative of the inner life-being, the vital Purusha. What would really happen then is that the wall between the inner self and the outer man would have broken down and the permanent mental and vital being from within, the mental and vital representatives of the immortal psychic entity, would govern the life. Our mind nature and our life nature could then be a continuous progressive expression of the soul and not a nexus of successive formations preserved only in their essence. Our mental personality and life personality would then subsist without dissolution from birth to birth; they would be in this sense immortal, persistently surviving, continuous in their sense of identity. This would be evidently an immense victory of soul and mind and life over the Inconscience and the limitations of material Nature.

But such a survival could only persist in the subtle body; the being would still have to discard its physical form, pass to other worlds and in its return put on a new body. The awakened mental Purusha and vital Purusha, preserving the mind sheath and the life sheath of the subtle body which are usually discarded, would return with them into a new birth and keep a vivid and sustained sense of a permanent being of mind and life constituted by the past and continuing into the present and future; but the basis of physical existence, the material body, could not be preserved even by this change. The physical being could only endure, if by some means its

physical causes of decay and disruption could be overcome¹ and at the same time it could be made so plastic and progressive in its structure and its functioning that it would answer to each change demanded of it by the progress of the inner Person; it must be able to keep pace with the soul in its formation of self-expressive personality, its long unfolding of a secret spiritual divinity and the slow transformation of the mental into the divine mental or spiritual existence. This consummation of a triple immortality, — immortality of the nature completing the essential immortality of the spirit and the psychic survival of death, — might be the crown of rebirth and a momentous indication of the conquest of the material Inconscience and Ignorance even in the very foundation of the reign of Matter. But the true immortality would still be the eternity of the spirit; the physical survival could only be relative, terminable at will, a temporal sign of the spirit's victory here over Death and Matter.

(C 22: 853-55)

1. Even if Science — physical Science or occult Science — were to discover the necessary conditions or means for an indefinite survival of the body, still, if the body could not adapt itself so as to become a fit instrument of expression for the inner growth, the soul would find some way to abandon it and pass on to a new incarnation. The material or physical causes of death are not its sole or its true cause; its true inmost reason is the spiritual necessity for the evolution of a new being.



SILENCING THE MIND

Silencing the mind

It is not an undesirable thing for the mind to fall silent, to be free from thoughts and still — for it is oftenest when the mind falls silent that there is the full descent of a wide peace from above and in that wide tranquillity the realisation of the silent Self above the mind spread out in its vastness everywhere. Only, when there is the peace and the mental silence, the vital mind tries to rush in and occupy the place or else the mechanical mind tries to raise up for the same purpose its round of trivial habitual thoughts. What the sadhak has to do is to be careful to reject and hush these outsiders, so that during the meditation at least the peace and quietude of the mind and vital may be complete. This can be done best if you keep a strong and silent will. That will is the will of the Purusha behind the mind; when the mind is at peace, when it is silent one can become aware of the Purusha, silent also, separate from the action of the nature.

To be calm, steady, fixed in the spirit, *dhīra*, *sthira*, this quietude of the mind, this separation of the inner Purusha from the outer Prakriti is very helpful, almost indispensable. So long as the being is subject to the whirl of thoughts or the turmoil of the vital movements, one cannot be thus calm and fixed in the spirit. To detach oneself, to stand back from them, to feel them separate from oneself is indispensable.

(S 23: 638)

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The reason why he is not getting knowledge, probably, is that his mind is active. So long as the mind is active Higher Knowledge cannot come. He can get mental knowledge, of course.

Ask him to make his mind passive and open to the Higher Knowledge. Let him stop the egoistic activity in his mind. When I ask him to be passive I do not mean that he should repress the thoughts that come to his mind; he should rather separate himself as the mental Purusha and watch the thoughts as happening in him, but not as his. He has to watch them and reject those that are to be rejected.

(E: 172)

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. . . . I myself had my experience of Nirvana and silence in the Brahman, etc. long before there was any knowledge of the overhead spiritual planes; it came first simply by an absolute stillness and blotting out as it were of all mental, emotional and other inner activities — the body continued indeed to see, walk, speak and do its other business, but as an empty automatic machine and nothing more. . . . there was only an awareness of That as the sole Reality, all else being quite unsubstantial, void, non-real. As to what realised that Reality, it was a nameless consciousness which was not other than That;¹ one could perhaps say this, though hardly even so much as this, since there was no mental concept of it, but not more. . . . Consciousness . . . suddenly emptied itself of all inner contents and remained aware only of unreal surroundings and of Something real but ineffable. . . .

(S 22: 273)

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If the difficulty in meditation is that thoughts of all kinds come in, that is not due to hostile forces but to the ordinary nature of the human mind. All sadhaks have this difficulty and with many it lasts for a very long time. There are several ways of getting rid of it. One of them is to look at the thoughts and observe what is the nature of the human mind as they show it but not to give any sanction and to let them run down till they come to a standstill — this is a way recommended by Vivekananda in his Rajayoga. Another is to look at the thoughts as not one's own, to stand back as the witness Purusha and refuse the sanction — the thoughts are regarded as things coming from outside, from Prakriti, and they must be felt as if they were passers-by crossing the mind-space with whom one has no connection and in whom one takes no interest. In this way it usually happens that after a time the mind divides into two, a part which is the mental witness watching and perfectly undisturbed and quiet and a part which is the object of observation, the Prakriti part in which the thoughts cross or wander. Afterwards one can proceed to silence or quiet the Prakriti part also. There is a third, an active method by which one looks to see where the thoughts come from and finds they come not from oneself, but from outside the head as it were; if one can detect them coming, then, before they enter, they have to be thrown away altogether. This is perhaps the most difficult way and not all can do it, but if it can be done it is the shortest and most powerful road to silence.

(S 23: 731)

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1. Mark that I did not think these things, there were no thoughts or concepts nor did they present themselves like that to any Me; it simply just was so or was self-apparently so.

To reject doubts means control of one's thoughts — very certainly so. But the control of one's thoughts is as necessary as the control of one's vital desires and passions or the control of the movements of one's body — for the yoga, and not for the yoga only. One cannot be a fully developed mental being even, if one has not a control of the thoughts, is not their observer, judge, master, — the mental Purusha, *manomaya puruṣa, sākṣī, anumantā, īśvara*. It is no more proper for the mental being to be the tennis-ball of unruly and uncontrollable thoughts than to be a rudderless ship in the storm of the desires and passions or a slave of either the inertia or the impulses of the body. I know it is more difficult because man being primarily a creature of mental Prakriti identifies himself with the movements of his mind and cannot at once dissociate himself and stand free from the swirl and eddies of the mind whirlpool. It is comparatively easy for him to put a control on his body, at least on a certain part of its movements; it is less easy but still very possible after a struggle to put a mental control on his vital impulsions and desires; but to sit like the Tantric yogi on the river, above the whirlpool of his thoughts, is less facile. Nevertheless, it can be done; all developed mental men, those who get beyond the average, have in one way or other or at least at certain times and for certain purposes to separate the two parts of the mind, the active part which is a factory of thoughts and the quiet masterful part which is at once a Witness and a Will, observing them, judging, rejecting, eliminating, accepting, ordering corrections and changes, the Master in the House of Mind, capable of self-empire, *sāmrājya*.

The yogi goes still farther; he is not only a master there, but even while in mind in a way, he gets out of it as it were, and stands above or quite back from it and free. For him the image of the factory of thoughts is no longer quite valid; for he sees that thoughts come from outside, from the universal Mind or universal Nature, sometimes formed and distinct, sometimes unformed and then they are given shape somewhere in us. The principal business of our mind is either a response of acceptance or a refusal to these thought-waves (as also vital waves, subtle physical energy waves) or this giving a Personal-mental form to thought-stuff (or vital movements) from the enviroing Nature-Force. It was my great debt to Lele that he showed me this. "Sit in meditation," he said, "but do not think, look only at your mind; you will see thoughts *coming into it*; before they can enter throw these away from your mind till your mind is capable of entire silence." I had never heard before of thoughts coming visibly into the mind from outside, but I did not think either of questioning the truth or the possibility, I simply sat down and did it. In a moment my mind became silent as a windless air on a high mountain summit and then I saw one thought and then another coming in a concrete way from outside; I flung them away before they could enter and take hold of the brain and in three days I was free. From that moment, in principle, the mental being in me became a free Intelligence, a universal Mind, not limited to the narrow circle of personal thought as a labourer in a thought factory, but a receiver of knowledge from all the hundred realms of being and free to choose

what it willed in this vast sight-empire and thought-empire. I mention this only to emphasise that the possibilities of the mental being are not limited and that it can be the free Witness and Master in its own house. It is not to say that everybody can do it in the way I did it and with the same rapidity of the decisive movement (for, of course, the latter fullest developments of this new untrammelled mental power took time, many years) but a progressive freedom and mastery of one's mind is perfectly within the possibilities of anyone who has the faith and the will to undertake it.

(S 24: 1257-58)



THE EVOLUTIONARY DESTINY

A programme given to a seeker

- I. Separation of Purusha and Prakriti to establish tranquility of heart and mind.
 - (a) Separated Purusha, calm, observing Prakriti.
 - (b) Prakriti in the heart and mind attending calmness.
- II. Offering of all the actions, all that is done in your life as a sacrifice to the Lord.
- III. Realisation of the Higher Divine Shakti doing all the works.
 - (a) Living with the constant idea that it is the Shakti which does the work.
 - (b) Feeling of the Divine Shakti descending from above the mind and moving the whole being.

(C 36: 428)

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Man's endeavour to turn his gaze upward and inward

But man not only turns his gaze downward and around him, when he has reached his higher level, but upward towards what is above him and inward towards what is occult within him. In him not only the downward gaze of the universal Being in the evolution has become conscious, but its conscious upward and inward gaze also develops. The animal lives as if satisfied with what Nature has done for it; if there is any upward gaze of the secret spirit within its animal being, it has nothing consciously to do with it, that is still Nature's business: it is man who first makes this upward gaze consciously his own business. For already by his possession of intelligent will, deformed ray of the gnosis though it be, he begins to put on the double nature of Sachchidananda; he is no longer, like the animal, an undeveloped conscious being entirely driven by Prakriti, a slave of the executive Force, played with by the mechanical energies of Nature, but has begun to be a developing conscious soul or Purusha interfering with what was her sole affair, wishing to have a say in it and eventually to be the master. He cannot do it yet, he is too much in her meshes, too much involved in her established mechanism: but he feels, — though as yet too vaguely and uncertainly, — that the spirit within him wishes to rise to yet higher heights, to widen its bounds; something within, something occult, knows that it is not the intention of the deeper conscious Soul-Nature, the Purusha-Prakriti, to be

satisfied with his present lowness and limitations. To climb to higher altitudes, to get a greater scope, to transform his lower nature, this is always a natural impulse of man as soon as he has made his place for himself in the physical and vital world of earth and has a little leisure to consider his farther possibilities. It must be so not because of any false and pitiful imaginative illusion in him, but, first, because he is the imperfect, still developing mental being and must strive for more development, for perfection, and still more because he is capable, unlike other terrestrial creatures, of becoming aware of what is deeper than mind, of the soul within him, and of what is above the mind, of supermind, of spirit, capable of opening to it, admitting it, rising towards it, taking hold of it. It is in his human nature, in all human nature, to exceed itself by conscious evolution, to climb beyond what he is. Not individuals only, but in time the race also, in a general rule of being and living if not in all its members, can have the hope, if it develops a sufficient will, to rise beyond the imperfections of our present very undivine nature and to ascend at least to a superior humanity, to rise nearer, even if it cannot absolutely reach, to a divine manhood or supermanhood. At any rate, it is the compulsion of evolutionary Nature in him to strive to develop upward, to erect the ideal, to make the endeavour.

(C 22: 744-45)

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Discovery of the Self

It is true again that it is difficult for man's mind to distinguish entirely the soul or self or any spiritual element in him from the mental and vital formation in which it makes its appearance; but that is only so long as the emergence is not complete. In the animal mind is not quite distinct from its own life-matrix and life-matter; its movements are so involved in the life movements that it cannot detach itself from them, cannot stand separate and observe them; but in man mind has become separate, he can become aware of his mental operations as distinct from his life operations, his thought and will can disengage themselves from his sensations and impulses, desires and emotional reactions, can become detached from them, observe and control them, sanction or cancel their functioning: he does not as yet know the secrets of his being well enough to be aware of himself decisively and with certitude as a mental being in a life and body, but he has that impression and can take inwardly that position. So too at first soul in man does not appear as something quite distinct from mind and from mentalised life; its movements are involved in the mind movements, its operations seem to be mental and emotional activities; the mental human being is not aware of a soul in him standing back from the mind and life and body, detaching itself, seeing and controlling and moulding their action and formation: but, as the inner evolution proceeds, this is precisely what can, must and

does happen, — it is the long-delayed but inevitable next step in our evolutionary destiny. There can be a decisive emergence in which the being separates itself from thought and sees itself in an inner silence as the spirit in mind, or separates itself from the life movements, desires, sensations, kinetic impulses and is aware of itself as the spirit supporting life, or separates itself from the body sense and knows itself as a spirit ensouling Matter: this is the discovery of ourselves as the Purusha, a mental being or a life-soul or a subtle self supporting the body. This is taken by many as a sufficient discovery of the true self and in a certain sense they are right; for it is the self or spirit that so represents itself in regard to the activities of Nature, and this revelation of its presence is enough to disengage the spiritual element: but self-discovery can go farther, it can even put aside all relation to form or action of Nature. For it is seen that these selves are representations of a divine Entity to which mind, life and body are only forms and instruments: we are then the Soul looking at Nature, knowing all her dynamisms in us, not by mental perception and observation, but by an intrinsic consciousness and its direct sense of things and its intimate exact vision, able therefore by its emergence to put a close control on our nature and change it. When there is a complete silence in the being, either a stillness of the whole being or a stillness behind unaffected by surface movements, then we can become aware of a Self, a spiritual substance of our being, an existence exceeding even the soul individuality, spreading itself into universality, surpassing all dependence on any natural form or action, extending itself upward into a transcendence of which the limits are not visible. It is these liberations of the spiritual part in us which are the decisive steps of the spiritual evolution in Nature.

(C 22: 886-87)

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The cosmic Purusha in humanity

The universal Spirit in things involved in the Nescience of the physical universe evolves its nature self in a succession of physical forms up the graded series of Matter, Life, Mind and Spirit. It emerges first as a secret soul in material forms quite subject on the surface to the nescience; it develops as a soul still secret but about to emerge in vital forms that stand on the borders between nescience and the partial light of consciousness which is our ignorance; it develops still farther as the initially conscient soul in the animal mind and, finally, as the more outwardly conscient, but not yet fully conscient soul in man: the consciousness is there throughout in our occult parts of being, the development is in the manifesting Nature. This evolutionary development has a universal as well as an individual aspect: the Universal develops the grades of its being and the ordered variation of the universality of itself in the

series of its evolved forms of being; the individual soul follows the line of this cosmic series and manifests what is prepared in the universality of the Spirit. The universal Man, the cosmic Purusha in humanity, is developing in the human race the power that has grown into humanity from below it and shall yet grow to supermind and spirit and become the Godhead in man who is aware of his true and integral self and the divine universality of his nature. The individual must have followed this line of development; he must have presided over a soul-experience in the lower forms of life before he took up the human evolution: as the One was capable of assuming in its universality these lower forms of the plant and animal, so must the individual, now human, have been capable of assuming them in his previous stages of existence. He now appears as a human soul, the Spirit accepting the inner and outer form of humanity, but he is not limited by this form any more than he was limited by the plant or animal forms previously assumed by him; he can pass on from it to a greater self-expression in a higher scale of Nature.

(C 22: 789-90)

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Individual self — a portion of the Transcendent and cosmic Self

The individual self is usually described as a portion of the Transcendent and cosmic Self — in the higher and subtler ranges of the consciousness it knows itself as that, but in the lower where the consciousness is more and more clouded it identifies itself with surface forms of personality, creations of Prakriti and becomes unaware of its divine origin. Self when one becomes aware of it is felt as something self-existent and eternal which is not identified with forms of mental, vital and physical personality, — these are only small expressions of its potentialities in Nature. What people call themselves now is only the ego or the mind or the life-force or the body, but that is because they think in the terms of the formations of Prakriti and do not see behind them.

(S 22: 285)

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Equality and self-control are most necessary to Yoga

. . . Equality and self-control are most necessary to Yoga, but also most *difficult*; one has to strive always after them; they are not, at least in their completeness, easily attainable. The whole being has to be pervaded by calm and peace; the nerves and cells of the body have to be full of calm and peace. Until then what one has to strive to attain is inner calm in the inner being which remains even when the outer is

disturbed by invasions of grief, [unease?] or anger. The Yogi arrives first at a sort of a division in his being on which the inner Purusha fixed and calm looks at the perturbations of the outer man as one looks at the passions of an unreasonable child; that once fixed, he can proceed afterwards to control the outer man also. Whether he can easily control the actions depends on the temperament of his outer man, whether it is vehement, emotional and passionate or comparatively sedate and quiet. Such a complete control of the outer man needs a long and arduous tapasya. It cannot be expected and even the [assured?] inner calm cannot be expected of those who are still in a very early stage of the journey, who are still sadhaks and not Yogis.

(D: 355)

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A lot of tapasya needed to make the theoretical practical

The soul is the witness, upholder, experiencer, but it is master only in theory, in fact it is not-master, *anīśa*, so long as it consents to the Ignorance. For that is a general consent which implies that the Prakriti gambols about with the Purusha and does pretty well what she likes with him. When he wants to get back his mastery, make the theoretical practical, he needs a lot of tapasya to do it.

The psychic has always been veiled, consenting to the play of mind, physical and vital, experiencing everything through them in the ignorant mental, vital and physical way. How then can it be that they are bound to change at once when it just takes the trouble to whisper or say, “Let there be Light”? They have a tremendous negating power and can refuse and do refuse point-blank. The mind resists with an obstinate persistency in argument and a constant confusion of ideas, the vital with a fury of bad will aided by the mind’s obliging reasonings on its side, the physical resists with an obstinate inertia and crass fidelity to old habit, and when they have done, the general Nature comes in and says, “What, you are going to get free from me so easily? Not, if I know it,” and it besieges and throws back the old nature on you again and again as long as it can. Yet you say it is the soul that wants all this “fun” and goes off laughing and prancing to get some more!

(S 24: 1111)

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OUR DEEPER SELVES

The first step to change of nature

As to the change of nature, the first step is to become conscious and separate from the old surface nature. For, this rajasic vital nature is a surface creation of Prakriti, it is not the true being; however persistent it seems, it is only a temporary combination of vital movements. Behind is the true mental and vital being supported by the psychic. The true being is calm, wide, peaceful. By drawing back and becoming separate one creates the possibility of living in the peace of this inner Purusha and no longer identified with the surface Prakriti. Afterwards it will be much easier to change by the force of the psychic perception and the Peace and Power and Light from above the surface being.

(S 24: 1692-93)

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Elements that compose the being of man

The mental being within watches, observes and passes judgment on all that happens in you. The psychic does not watch and observe in this way like a witness, but it feels and knows spontaneously in a much more direct and luminous way, by the very purity of its own nature and the divine instinct within it, and so, whenever it comes to the front it reveals at once what are the right and what the wrong movements in your nature.

The being of man is composed of these elements — the psychic behind supporting all, the inner mental, vital and physical, and the outer, quite external nature of mind, life and body which is their instrument of expression. But above all is the central being (Jivatma) which uses them all for its manifestation: it is a portion of the Divine Self; but this reality of himself is hidden from the external man who replaces this inmost self and soul of him by the mental and vital ego. It is only those who have begun to know themselves that become aware of their true central being; but still it is always there standing behind the action of mind, life and body and is most directly represented by the psychic which is itself a spark of the Divine. It is by the growth of the psychic element in one's nature that one begins to come into conscious touch with one's central being above. When that happens and the central being uses a conscious will to control and organize the movements of the nature, it is then that one has a real, a spiritual as opposed to a partial and merely mental or moral self-mastery.

(S 22: 301-02)

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A power of the Spirit presides over each grade of our being

. . . the spirit, the Purusha is one but it adapts itself to the formations of Nature. Over each grade of our being a power of the Spirit presides; we have within us and discover when we go deep enough inwards a mind-self, a life-self, a physical self; there is a being of mind, a mental Purusha, expressing something of itself on our surface in the thoughts, perceptions, activities of our mind nature, a being of life which expresses something of itself in the impulses, feelings, sensations, desires, external life activities of our vital nature, a physical being, a being of the body which expresses something of itself in the instincts, habits, formulated activities of our physical nature. These beings or part selves of the self in us are powers of the Spirit and therefore not limited by their temporary expression, for what is thus formulated is only a fragment of its possibilities; but the expression creates a temporary mental, vital or physical personality which grows and develops even as the psychic being or soul personality grows and develops within us. Each has its own distinct nature, its influence, its action on the whole of us; but on our surface all these influences and all this action, as they come up, mingle and create an aggregate surface being which is a composite, an amalgam of them all, an outer persistent and yet shifting and mobile formation for the purposes of this life and its limited experience.

(C 22: 929-30)

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Self and Nature

The Self or Atman is inactive; Nature (Prakriti) or Shakti acts. When the Self is felt it is first an infinite existence, silence, freedom, peace that is felt — that is called Atman or Self. What action takes place in it is according to the realisation either felt as forces of Nature working in that wideness, as the Divine Shakti working or as the cosmic Divine or various powers of them working. It is not felt that the Self is acting.

(S 23: 1078)

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The Prime Minister and the constitutional king

The mental being spoken of by the Upanishad is not part of the mental nervous physical composite — it is the *manomayah puruṣaḥ prāṇa-śarīra-netā*, the mental being leader of the life and body. It could not be so described if it were part of the

composite. Nor can the composite or part of it be the Purusha, — for the composite is composed of Prakriti. It is described as *manomaya* by the Upanishads because the psychic being is behind the veil and man being the mental being in the life and body lives in his mind and not in his psychic, so to him the *manomaya puruṣa* is the leader of the life and body, — of the psychic behind supporting the whole he is not aware or dimly aware in his best moments. The psychic is represented in man by the Prime Minister, the *manomaya*, itself being a mild constitutional king; it is the *manomaya* to whom Prakriti refers for assent to her actions. . . .

(S 22: 302)

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Atman and Purusha

What you describe is what the Gita means by the realisation that all action is done by the Prakriti. You feel it mechanical because you are in the physical consciousness where all is mechanism. On the mental and vital plane one can have the same experience, but of the actions as a play of forces. What is lacking at present in you is the other side of the experience viz. that of the silent Atman or else of the witness Purusha calm, tranquil, free, pure and undisturbed by the play of the Prakriti. It tries to come and you are on the point of going into it, but the tendency of externalisation is still too strong. This tendency took you when you came down into the physical — for it is the nature of the ordinary physical consciousness to precipitate itself into the action of the external personality. You have to get back the power of the internal consciousness — above as Atman, below as Purusha first witness and then master of the nature.

(S 24: 1441)

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The various Purushas in us are projections of the Atman

The psychic being is the soul, the Purusha in the secret heart supporting by its presence the action of the mind, life and body. The vital is the *prāṇamaya puruṣa* spoken of in the *Taittiriya Upaniṣad*, the being behind the Force of Life; in its outer form in the Ignorance it generates the desire-soul which governs most men and which they mistake often for the real soul.

The Atman is the Self or Spirit that remains above, pure and stainless, unaffected by the stains of life, by desire and ego and ignorance. It is realised as the true being of the individual, but also more widely as the *same being* in all and as the Self in the cosmos; it has also a self-existence above the individual and cosmos and it is then

called the Paramatma, the supreme Divine Being. This distinction has nothing to do with the distinction between the psychic and the vital: the vital being is not what is known as the Atman.

The vital as the desire-soul and desire-nature controls the consciousness to a large extent in most men, because men are governed by desire. But even in the surface human nature the proper ruler of the consciousness is the mental being, *manomayah puruṣaḥ prāṇa-sārīra-netā* of the Upanishad. The psychic influences the consciousness from behind, but one has to go out of the ordinary consciousness into the inmost being to find it and make it the ruler of the consciousness as it should be. To do that is one of the principal aims of the yoga. The vital should be an instrument of the consciousness not its ruler.

The vital being is not the I — the ego is mental, vital, physical. Ego implies the identification of our existence with outer self, the ignorance of our true self above and our psychic being within us.

In a certain sense the various Purushas or beings in us, psychic, mental, vital, physical are projections of the Atman, but that gets its full truth only when we get into our inner being and know the inner truth of ourselves. On the surface, in the Ignorance, it is the mental, vital, physical Prakriti that acts and the Purusha is disfigured, as it were, in the action of the Prakriti. It is not our true mental being, our true vital being, our true physical being even that we are aware of; these remain behind, veiled and silent. It is the mental, vital, physical ego that we take for our being until we get knowledge.

(S 22: 299-300)

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Central being

How should I develop the push, the harmony and resolution of the central being . . . ?

The first is to get into touch with your central being and get it into action. That central may be the psychic, it may be the Self above with the mental Purusha as its delegate. . . .

(N: 650-51)

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The central being is the being which presides over the different births one after the other, but is itself unborn, for it does not descend into the being but is above it — it holds together the mental, vital and physical being and all the various parts of the

personality and it controls the life either through the mental being and the mental thought and will or through the psychic, whichever may happen to be most in front or most powerful in nature. If it does not exercise its control, then the consciousness is in great disorder and every part of the personality acts for itself so that there is no coherence in the thought, feeling or action.

(S 22: 269)

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Developing a strong central being

. . . man is not made up of one piece but of many pieces and each part of him has a personality of its own. . . . But all men are like that, in reality. The aim should be in yoga to develop (if one has it not already) a strong central being and harmonise under it all the rest, changing what has to be changed. If this central being is the psychic, there is no great difficulty. If it is the mental Being, *manomayah puruṣaḥ prāṇa-śarīra-netā*, then it is more difficult — unless the mental being can learn to be always in contact with and aided by the greater Will and Power of the Divine.

(S 22: 303)

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Living in the central being

It is a very serious difficulty in one's yoga — the absence of a central will always superior to the waves of the Prakriti forces, always in touch with the Mother, imposing its central aim and aspiration on the nature. That is because you have not yet learned to live in your central being; you have been accustomed to run with every wave of Force, no matter of what kind, that rushed upon you and to identify yourself with it for the time being. It is one of the things that has to be unlearned; you must find your central being with the psychic as its basis and live in it.

(S 23: 1011)

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Para Prakriti and Apara Prakriti

There is no difference between Jiva and Jivatma in this language — so this distinction cannot be made. The Apara Prakriti is Nature which manifests all these minds, lives and bodies. The Para Prakriti is the very nature of the Divine — a supreme Consciousness-Force which manifests the multiple Divine as the Many.

(S 22: 279)

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Central Being, Jiva, psychic being, Purusha and Prakriti

The Jiva is something more than the psychic being. The psychic being is behind the heart; while the Jiva is high above, connected with the Central Being. It is that which on every level of consciousness becomes the Purusha, the Prakriti and the personalities of Nature. . . .

(E: 152)

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Jivataman, the central being; the psychic, our inmost being

The central being — the Jivatman which is not born nor evolves but presides over the individual birth and evolution — puts forward a representative of himself on each plane of the consciousness. On the mental plane it is the true mental being, *manomaya puruṣa*, on the vital plane the true vital being, *prāṇamaya puruṣa*, on the physical plane the true physical being, *annamaya puruṣa*. Each being, therefore is, so long as the Ignorance lasts, centred round his mental, vital or physical Purusha, according to the plane on which he predominantly lives, and that is to him his central being. But the true representative all the time is concealed behind the mind, vital and physical — it is the psychic, our inmost being.

When the inmost knowledge begins to come, we become aware of the psychic being within us and it comes forward and leads the sadhana. We become aware also of the Jivatman, the undivided Self or Spirit above the manifestation of which the psychic is the representative here.

(S 22: 270)

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Soul, psyche, Jivatman, psychic being; apara prakriti, para prakriti; Being and Becoming

The soul, representative of the central being, is a spark of the Divine supporting all individual existence in Nature; the psychic being is a conscious form of that soul growing in the evolution — in the persistent process that develops first life in Matter, mind in life, until finally mind can develop into overmind and overmind into the supramental Truth. The soul supports the nature in its evolution through these grades, but is itself not any of these things.

The lower Nature, *aparā prakṛti*, is this external objective and superficial subjective apparent Nature which manifests all these minds, lives and bodies. The supreme Nature, *parā prakṛti*, concealed behind it is the very nature of the Divine

— a supreme Consciousness-Force which manifests the multiple Divine as the Many. These Many are in themselves eternal selves of the Supreme in his supreme Nature, *parā prakṛti*. Here in relation to this world they appear as the Jivatmas supporting the evolution of the natural existences, *sarva-bhūtāni*, in the mutable Becoming which is the life of the Kshara (mobile or mutable) Purusha. The Jiva (or Jivatma) and the creatures, *sarva-bhūtāni*, are not the same thing. The Jivatmas really stand above the creation even though concerned in it; the natural existences, *sarva-bhūtāni*, are the creatures of Nature. Man, bird, beast, reptile are natural existences, but the individual Self in them is not even for a moment characteristically man, bird, beast or reptile; in its evolution it is the same through all these changes, a spiritual being that consents to the play of Nature.

What is original and eternal for ever in the Divine is the Being, what is developed in consciousness, conditions, forces, forms, etc., by the Divine Power is the Becoming. The eternal Divine is the Being; the universe in Time and all that is apparent in it is a Becoming. The eternal Being in its superior nature, Para Prakriti, is at once One and Many; but the eternal Multiplicity of the Divine when it stands behind the created existences, *sarva-bhūtāni*, appears as (or as we say, becomes) the Jiva, *parā prakṛtir jīvabhūtā*. In the psychic, on the other hand, there are two aspects, the psychic existence or soul behind and in front the form of individuality it takes in its evolution in Nature.

The soul or psyche is immutable only in the sense that it contains all the possibilities of the Divine within it, but it has to evolve them and in its evolution it assumes the form of a developing psychic individual evolving in the manifestation the individual Prakriti and taking part in the evolution. It is the spark of the Divine Fire that grows behind the mind, vital and physical by means of the psychic being until it is able to transform the Prakriti of Ignorance into a Prakriti of Knowledge. This evolving psychic being is not therefore at any time all that the soul or essential psychic existence bears within it; it temporalises and individualises what is eternal in potentiality, transcendent in essence, in this projection of the spirit.

(S 22: 267-69)

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Jivatman, the various Purushas and the psychic being

. . . There is no statement that the place of the Jivatman is in the supramental plane alone; if that were so, man could have no knowledge of his individual Self or Spirit before he rose to the supramental plane; he could not have any experience of the Self, though he may have the sense of the dissolution of his ego in something Universal. But he can become aware of his unborn non-evolving Self, a centre of the Divine Consciousness, long before that; the Self cosmic or individual is

experienced long before rising to supermind. If it were not so, spiritual experience of that high kind would be impossible to mental man, liberation would be impossible; he would first have to become a supramental being. As for the Purusha it is there on all planes; there is a mental Purusha, *manomaya*, leader of the life and body, as the Upanishad puts it, a vital, a physical Purusha; there is the psychic being or Chaitya Purusha which supports and carries all these as it were. One may say that these are projections of the Jivatman put there to uphold Prakriti on the various levels of the being. The Upanishad speaks also of a supramental and a Bliss Purusha, and if the supramental and the Bliss Nature were organised in the evolution on earth we could become aware of them upholding the movements here.

As for the psychic being, it enters into the evolution, enters into the body at birth and goes out of it at death; but the Jivatman, as I know it, is unborn and eternal although upholding the manifested personality from above. The psychic being can be described as the Jivatman entering into birth, if you like, but if the distinction is not made, then the nature of the Atman is blurred and a confusion arises. This is a necessary distinction for metaphysical knowledge and for something that is very important in spiritual experience. . . .

(S 22: 276)

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Self, soul, psychic, Jivatman, ego

The Spirit is the Atman, Brahman, Essential Divine.

When the One Divine manifests its ever inherent multiplicity, this essential Self or Atman becomes for that manifestation the central being who presides from above over the evolution of its personalities and terrestrial lives here, but is itself an eternal portion of the Divine and prior to the terrestrial manifestation — *parā prakṛtir jīvabhūtā*.

In this lower manifestation, *aparā prakṛti*, this eternal portion of the Divine appears as the soul, a spark of the Divine Fire, supporting the individual evolution, supporting the mental, vital and physical being. The psychic being is the spark growing into a Fire, evolving with the growth of the consciousness. The psychic being is therefore evolutionary, not like the Jivatman prior to the evolution.

But man is not aware of the self or Jivatman, he is aware only of his ego, or he is aware of the mental being which controls the life and the body. But more deeply he becomes aware of his soul or psychic being as his true centre, the Purusha in the heart; the psychic is the central being in the evolution, it proceeds from and represents the Jivatman, the eternal portion of the Divine. When there is the full consciousness, the Jivatman and the psychic being join together.

The ego is a formation of Nature; but it is not a formation of physical nature

alone, therefore it does not cease with the body. There is a mental and vital ego also.

The base of the material consciousness here is not only the Ignorance, but the Inconscience — that is, the consciousness is involved in form of Matter and energy of Matter. It is not only the material consciousness but the vital and the mental too that are separated from the Truth by the Ignorance.

(S 22: 278-79)

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Mental formulation not indispensable, but if mind is clarified things are easier for the sadhak

The Jivatman has its representative power in the individual nature here; this power is the Purusha upholding the Prakriti — centrally in the psychic, more instrumentally in the mind, vital and physical being and nature. It is therefore possible to regard these or any of them as if they were the Jiva here. All the same I am obliged to make a distinction not only for clear thinking but because of the necessity of experience and integral dynamic self-knowledge without which it is difficult to carry through this yoga. It is not indispensable to formulate mentally to oneself all this, one can have the experience and, if one sees clearly with an inner perception, it is sufficient for progress towards the goal. Nevertheless if the mind is clarified without falling into mental rigidity and error, things are easier for the sadhak of the yoga. But plasticity must be preserved, for loss of plasticity is the danger of a systematic intellectual formulation; one must look into the thing itself and not get tied up in the idea. Nothing of all this can be really grasped except by the actual spiritual experience.

(S 22: 275)

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True being not the same as inner being

The true mental being is not the same as the inner mental — true mental, true vital, true physical being means the Purusha of that level freed from the error and ignorant thought and will of the lower Prakriti and directly open to the knowledge and guidance above.

(S 22: 325)

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The true vital is in the inner consciousness, the external is that which is instrumental for the present play of Prakriti in the surface personality. When the change comes, the true vital rejects what is out of tune with its own truth from the external and makes it a true instrument for its expression, a means of expression of its inner will, not a thing of responses to the suggestions of the lower Nature. The strong distinction between the two practically disappears.

(S 22: 310)

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Inner being and inmost being

The psychic is not above but behind — its seat is behind the heart, its power is not knowledge but an essential or spiritual feeling — it has the clearest sense of the Truth and a sort of inherent perception of it which is of the nature of soul-perception and soul-feeling. It is our inmost being and supports all the others, mental, vital, physical, but it is also much veiled by them and has to act upon them as an influence rather than by its sovereign right of direct action; its direct action becomes normal and preponderant only at a high stage of development or by yoga. It is not the psychic being which, you feel, gives you the intuitions of things to be or warns you against the results of certain actions; that is some part of the inner being, sometimes the inner mental, sometimes the inner vital, sometimes, it may be, the inner or subtle physical Purusha. The inner being — inner mind, inner vital, inner or subtle physical — knows much that is unknown to the outer mind, the outer vital, the outer physical, for it is in a more direct contact with the secret forces of Nature. The psychic is the inmost being of all; a perception of truth which is inherent in the deepest substance of the consciousness, a sense of the good, true, beautiful, the Divine, is its privilege.

(S 22: 269)

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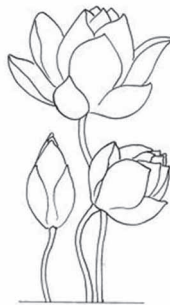
The most comprehensive of the aspects of the Reality

. . . whatever the posture taken or relation formed in any individual nodus of Purusha-Prakriti, the Being is in a fundamental cosmic relation lord or ruler of its nature: for even when it allows Nature to have its own way with it, its consent is necessary to support her workings. This comes out in its fullest revelation in the third aspect of the Reality, the Divine Being who is the master and creator of the universe. Here the supreme Person, the Being in its transcendental and cosmic consciousness and force, comes to the front, omnipotent, omniscient, the controller of all energies, the

Conscious in all that is conscient or inconscient, the Inhabitant of all souls and minds and hearts and bodies, the Ruler or Overruler of all works, the Enjoyer of all delight, the Creator who has built all things in his own being, the All-Person of whom all beings are personalities, the Power from whom are all powers, the Self, the Spirit in all, by his being the Father of all that is, in his Consciousness-Force the Divine Mother, the Friend of all creatures, the All-blissful and All-beautiful of whom beauty and joy are the revelation, the All-Beloved and All-Lover. In a certain sense, so seen and understood, this becomes the most comprehensive of the aspects of the Reality, since here all are united in a single formulation; for the Ishwara is supracosmic as well as intracosmic; He is that which exceeds and inhabits and supports all individuality; He is the supreme and universal Brahman, the Absolute, the supreme Self, the supreme Purusha.¹ But, very clearly, this is not the personal God of popular religions, a being limited by his qualities, individual and separate from all others; for all such personal gods are only limited representations or names and divine personalities of the one Ishwara. Neither is this the Saguna Brahman active and possessed of qualities, for that is only one side of the being of the Ishwara; the Nirguna immobile and without qualities is another aspect of His existence. Ishwara is Brahman the Reality, Self, Spirit, revealed as possessor, enjoyer of his own self-existence, creator of the universe and one with it, Pantheos, and yet superior to it, the Eternal, the Infinite, the Ineffable, the Divine Transcendence.

(C 21: 366-67)

1. *Gita.*



PSYCHIC INFLUENCES

The psychic being and the witness Purusha

What you experience is the first condition of the yogic consciousness and self-knowledge. The ordinary mind knows itself only as an ego with all the movements of the nature in a jumble and, identifying itself with these movements, thinks “I am doing this, feeling that, thinking, in joy or in sorrow etc.” The first beginning of real self-knowledge is when you feel yourself separate from the nature in you and its movements and then you see that there are many parts of your being, many personalities each acting on its own behalf and in its own way. The two different beings you feel are — one, the psychic being which draws you towards the Mother, the other the external being mostly vital which draws you outward and downwards towards the play of the lower nature. There is also in you behind the mind the being who observes, the witness Purusha, who can stand detached from the play of the nature, observing it and able to choose. It has to put itself always on the side of the psychic being and assent to and support its movement and to reject the downward and outward movement of the lower nature, which has to be subjected to the psychic and changed by its influence.

(S 22: 303-04)

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Two things necessary

For the discovery of the true individuality and building up of it in the nature, two things are necessary, first, to be conscious of one’s psychic being behind the heart and, next, this separation of the Purusha from the Prakriti. For the true individual is behind veiled by the activities of the outer nature.

(S 23: 638-39)

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Experiencing the Purusha in various ways

All depends on the experience. Very usually, it is the experience of the Purusha, often felt first as the Witness silent, upholding all the nature; but the Purusha can also be experienced as the Knower and the Ishwara. Sometimes it is as or through

the mental Purusha in one centre or another, sometimes as or through the vital Purusha that one can become aware of one's self or spirit. It is also possible to become aware of the secret psychic being within by itself as the true individual; or one can be aware of the psychic being as the pure "I" with these others standing in mind or vital as representatives in these domains or on these levels. . . .

(S 22: 272)

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A very important movement of the sadhana — standing back

The condition in which all movements become superficial and empty with no connection with the soul is a stage in the withdrawal from the surface consciousness to the inner consciousness. When one goes into the inner consciousness, it is felt as a calm, pure existence without any movement, but eternally tranquil, unmoved and separate from the outer nature. This comes as a result of detaching oneself from the movements, standing back from them and is a very important movement of the sadhana. The first result of it is an entire quietude but afterwards that quietude begins (without the quietude ceasing) to fill with the psychic and other inner movements which create a true inner and spiritual life behind the outer life and nature. It is then easier to govern and change the latter.

At present there are fluctuations in your consciousness because this inner state is not yet fully developed and established. When it is, there will still be fluctuations in the outer consciousness, but the inner quiet, force, love etc. will be constant and the superficial fluctuations will be watched by the inner being without its being shaken or troubled, until they are removed by the complete outer change.

As for X, it is best to let it pass and try to remain steady within and detached; one can't separate from all contacts; one must become more and more superior to their customary reactions.

(S 23: 1003-04)

*

The psychic being and the change of nature

For the actions to be psychic, the psychic must be in front. The observing Purusha can separate himself, but cannot change the Prakriti. But to be the observing Purusha is a first step. Afterwards there must be the action of the Purusha Will as an instrument of the Mother's force. This Will must be founded on a right consciousness which sees what is wrong, ignorant, selfish, egoistic, moved by desire in the nature and puts it right.

(S 23: 693)

*

The liberated psychic

. . . But the psychic is not a *bhāva*. It is a Purusha. . . .

By liberated psychic being I mean that it is no longer obliged to express itself under the conditions of the obscure and ignorant instruments, from behind a veil, but is able to come forward, control and change the action of mind and life and body.

If it is perhaps sometimes spoken of as purified and perfected, what must be meant is the psychic action in the mind, vital and the physical instruments. A purified inner being does not mean a purified psychic, but a purified inner mental, vital and physical. The epithets I used for the psychic were “awakened and liberated”.

(S 22: 290-91)

*

The psychic being is the soul developing in the evolution

The soul and the psychic being are practically the same, except that even in things which have not developed a psychic being, there is still a spark of the Divine which can be called the soul. The psychic being is called in Sanskrit the Purusha in the heart or the Chaitya Purusha. (The psychic being is the soul developing in the evolution.)

(S 22: 301)

*

Psychic — the Purusha in the heart

The psychic being in the old systems was spoken of as the Purusha in the heart (the secret heart — *hṛdaye guhāyām*) which corresponds very well to what we define as the psychic being behind the heart centre. It was also this that went out from the body at death and persisted — which again corresponds to our teaching that it is this which goes out and returns, linking a new life to former life. Also we say that the psychic is the divine portion within us — so too the Purusha in the heart is described as Ishwara of the individual nature in some place.

(S 22: 289)

*

Distinguishing the psychic

It is not possible to distinguish the psychic being at first. What has to be done is to grow conscious of an inner being which is separate from the external personality and nature — a consciousness or Purusha calm and detached from the outer actions of the Prakriti.

(S 23: 995)

*

The psychic can transform the Prakriti of Ignorance

The psychic being evolves, so it is not the immutable.

The psychic being is especially the soul of the individual evolving in the manifestation the individual Prakriti and taking part in the evolution. It is that spark of the Divine Fire that grows behind the mind, vital and physical as the psychic being until it is able to transform the Prakriti of Ignorance into Prakriti of knowledge. These things are not in the Gita, but we cannot limit our knowledge by the points in the Gita.

(S 22: 291)

*

Not to struggle but to stand back

. . . But it is best not to struggle with the resistances but to stand back from them, observe as a witness, reject these movements and call on the Divine Power to remove them. Surrender of the nature is not an easy thing and may take a long time; surrender of the self, if one can do it, is easier and once that is done, that of the nature will come about sooner or later. But for that it is necessary to detach oneself from the action of the Prakriti and see oneself as separate. To observe the movements as a witness without being discouraged or disturbed is the best way to effect the necessary detachment and separation. This also would help to increase the receptivity to any aid that may be given to him and to bring about the reliance.

(S 24: 1692)

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Surrender and the witness attitude

As for the surrender it is not inconsistent with the witness attitude. On the contrary by liberating from the ordinary Prakriti, it makes easier the surrender to the higher or divine Power. Very often when this witness attitude has not been taken but there is a successful calling in of the Force to act in one, one of the first things the Force does is to establish the witness attitude so as to be able to act with less interference or immixture from the movements of the lower Prakriti.

(S 23: 1007)

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A double and fluctuating movement

There is the same double [*the turn to an inner isolation and the turn towards contact and action*] and fluctuating movement in others . . . In such cases I generally do not stress upon either tendency but leave the consciousness to find its own poise, because I have seen that to press too much on the isolation tendency when the nature is not mainly contemplative does not succeed very well — unless of course the sadhak himself gets a strong and fixed determination that way. This may be the cause of what you felt. But the question between witness attitude and surrender does not arise, for the reason I have explained — one can very well aid or lead to the other as ours is a yoga which joins these things together and does not keep them always separate.

(S 23: 1007)

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Offering to the Divine and the emergence of the Purusha

The consciousness you speak of would be described in the Gita as the witness Purusha. The Purusha or basic consciousness is the true being or at least, in whatever plane it manifests, represents the true being. But in the ordinary nature of man it is covered up by the ego and the ignorant play of the Prakriti and remains veiled behind as the unseen Witness supporting the play of the Ignorance. When it emerges, you feel it as a consciousness behind, calm, central, unidentified with the play which depends upon it. It may be covered over, but it is always there. The emergence of the Purusha is the beginning of liberation. But it can also become slowly the Master — slowly because the whole habit of the ego and the play of the lower forces is against that. Still it can dictate what higher play is to replace the lower movement and then there is the process of that replacement, the higher coming, the lower

struggling to remain and push away the higher movement. You say rightly that the offering to the Divine shortens the whole thing and is more effective, but usually it cannot be done completely at once owing to the past habit and the two methods continue together until the complete surrender is possible.

(S 23: 1006)

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Separation of Purusha and Prakriti in this yoga

. . . In this yoga the methods of other yogas are taken up — like this of Purusha-Prakriti, but with a difference in the final object. Purusha separates from Prakriti, not in order to abandon her, but in order to know himself and her and to be no longer her plaything, but the knower, lord and upholder of the nature; but having become so or even in becoming so, one offers all that to the Divine. . . .

(S 23: 525)

*

Dealing with vital difficulties arising on offering the actions to the Divine

As for the offering of the actions to the Divine and the vital difficulty it raises, it is not possible to avoid the difficulty — you have to go through and conquer it. For, the moment you make this attempt, the vital arises with all its restless imperfections to oppose the change. However, there are three things you can do to alleviate and shorten the difficulty:

1. Detach yourself from this vital-physical — observe it as something not yourself; reject it, refuse your consent to its claims and impulses, but quietly as the witness Purusha whose refusal of sanction must ultimately prevail. This ought not to be difficult for you, if you have already learned to live more and more in the impersonal Self.

2. When you are not in this impersonality, still use your mental will and its power of assent or refusal, — not with a painful struggle, but in the same way, quietly, denying the claims of Desire, till these claims by loss of sanction and assent lose their force of return and become more and more faint and external.

3. If you become aware of the Divine above you or in your heart, call for help, for light and power from there to change the vital itself, and at the same time insist upon this vital till it itself learns to pray for the change.

Finally, the difficulty will be reduced to its smallest proportions the moment you can by the sincerity of your aspiration to the Divine and your surrender awaken the psychic being in you (the Purusha in the secret heart) so that it will come forward

and remain in front and pour its influence on all the movements of the mind, the vital and the physical consciousness. The work of transformation will still have to be done, but from that moment it will no longer be so hard and painful.

(S 23: 1010)

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Self-offering and surrender of ourselves and of our parts of nature to the Divine Being

One effective way often used to facilitate this entry into the inner self is the separation of the Purusha, the conscious being, from the Prakriti, the formulated nature. If one stands back from the mind and its activities so that they fall silent at will or go on as a surface movement of which one is the detached and disinterested witness, it becomes possible eventually to realise oneself as the inner Self of mind, the true and pure mental being, the Purusha; by similarly standing back from the life activities, it is possible to realise oneself as the inner Self of life, the true and pure vital being, the Purusha; there is even a Self of body of which, by standing back from the body and its demands and activities and entering into a silence of the physical consciousness watching the action of its energy, it is possible to become aware, a true and pure physical being, the Purusha. So too, by standing back from all these activities of nature successively or together, it becomes possible to realise one's inner being as the silent impersonal self, the witness Purusha. This will lead to a spiritual realisation and liberation, but will not necessarily bring about a transformation; for the Purusha, satisfied to be free and himself, may leave the Nature, the Prakriti, to exhaust its accumulated impetus by an unsupported action, a mechanical continuance not renewed and reinforced or vivified and prolonged by his consent, and use this rejection as a means of withdrawing from all nature. The Purusha has to become not only the witness but the knower and source, the master of all the thought and action, and this can only be partially done so long as one remains on the mental level or has still to use the ordinary instrumentation of mind, life and body. A certain mastery can indeed be achieved, but mastery is not transformation; the change made by it cannot be sufficient to be integral: for that it is essential to get back, beyond mind-being, life-being, body-being, still more deeply inward to the psychic entity inmost and profoundest within us — or else to open to the superconscient highest domains. For this penetration into the luminous crypt of the soul one has to get through all the intervening vital stuff to the psychic centre within us, however long, tedious or difficult may be the process. The method of detachment from the insistence of all mental and vital and physical claims and calls and impulses, a concentration in the heart, austerity, self-purification and rejection of the old mind movements and life movements, rejection of the ego of desire, rejection of false needs and false

habits, are all useful aids to this difficult passage: but the strongest, most central way is to found all such or other methods on a self-offering and surrender of ourselves and of our parts of nature to the Divine Being, the Ishwara. A strict obedience to the wise and intuitive leading of a Guide is also normal and necessary for all but a few specially gifted seekers.

(C 22: 939-41)

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The disposition of the consciousness determines everything

It all depends upon where the consciousness places itself and concentrates itself. If the consciousness places or concentrates itself within the ego, you are identified with the ego — if in the mind, it is identified with the mind and its activities and so on. If the consciousness puts its stress outside, it is said to live in the external being and becomes oblivious of its inner mind and vital and inmost psychic; if it goes inside, puts its centralising stress there, then it knows itself as the inner being or, still deeper, as the psychic being; if it ascends out of the body to the planes where self is naturally conscious of its wideness and freedom it knows itself as the Self and not the mind, life or body. It is this stress of consciousness that makes all the difference. That is why one has to concentrate the consciousness in heart or mind in order to go within or go above. It is the disposition of the consciousness that determines everything, makes one predominantly mental, vital, physical or psychic, bound or free, separate in the Purusha or involved in the Prakriti.

(S 22: 235-36)

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Seeing the Supreme and living in the Supreme

There are always two methods of living in the Supreme. One is to draw away the participation of the consciousness from things altogether and go so much inwards as to be separated from existence and live in contact with that which is beyond it. The other is to get to that which is the true Essence of all things, not allowing oneself to be absorbed and entangled by the external forms. Desire, attachment, slavery to the attractions of the external sense are the chief obstacle to this movement — so in either way they have to be got rid of. But it is quite possible to see the Supreme before the attraction of external sense is gone — only one cannot live securely in It if there is desire and external attachment because that is always taking one away from the inner poise.

(S 24: 1397)

TRANSFORMATION OF PRAKRITI

The liberated state

In the liberated state it is not the inner Purusha only that remains detached — the inner Purusha is always detached, only one is not conscious of it in the ordinary state. It is the Prakriti also that is not disturbed by the action of the gunas or attached to it — the mind, the vital, the physical (whatever Prakriti) begin to get the same quietude, unperturbed peace and detachment as the Purusha, but it is a quietude, not a cessation of all action. It is quietude in action itself. If it were not so, my statement in the *Arya* that there can be a desireless or liberated action on which I found the possibility of a free (*mukta*) action would be false. The whole being, Purusha-Prakriti, becomes detached (having no desire or attachment) even in the action of the gunas.

The outer being is also detached — the whole being is without desire or attachment and still action is possible. Action without desire is possible, action without attachment is possible, action without ego is possible.

(S 23: 684)

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Aim of Integral Yoga

. . . . For its [*Integral Yoga's*] aim is to become aware of and liberate and transform and unite all the being in the light of a Truth-consciousness which is above and cannot be reached if there is no entirely inward-going and no transcending and upward-going movement. . . .

(S 22: 274)

*

Not only liberation but a complete transformation

Even when there is the peace and the wideness, these things [vital physical ego-movements] can float on the surface and try to come in — only then they do not occupy the consciousness but touch it merely. It is what was regarded by the old yogis as a mechanical remnant of Prakriti, a continuation of its blind habit which remained after the essential liberation of the self. It was treated lightly as of no

importance — but that view is not tenable in our sadhana which aims not only at a liberation of the Purusha but at a *complete* transformation of the Prakriti also.

(S 23: 649-50)

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Silence in the inner being — a very favourable stage in the transformation

The silence descends into the inner being first — as also other things from the higher consciousness. One can become aware of this inner being calm, silent, untouched by the movements of Nature, full of knowledge or light, and at the same time be aware of another lesser being, the small personality on the surface which is made up of the movements of Nature or else still subject to them or else, if not subject to them, still open to invasion by them. This is a condition that any number of sadhaks and yogis have experienced. The inner being means the psychic, the inner mind, the inner vital, the inner physical. In this condition none of these can be even touched, so there has been an essential purification. All need not feel this division into two consciousnesses, but most do. When it is there, the will that decides the action is in the inner being, not in the outer — so the invasion of the outer by vital movements can in no way compel the action. It is on the contrary a very favourable stage in the transformation because the inner being can bring the whole force of the higher consciousness in it to change the nature wholly, observing the action of Nature without being affected by it, putting the force for change wherever needed and setting the whole being right as one does with a machine. That is if one wants a transformation. For many Vedantins don't think it necessary — they say the inner being is *mukta*, the rest is simply a mechanical continuation of the impetus of Nature in the physical man and will drop away with the body so that one can depart into Nirvana.

(S 23: 1008)

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Action done for the Divine alone

I do not mean by work action done in the ego and the ignorance, for the satisfaction of the ego and in the drive of rajasic desire. There can be no Karmayoga without the will to get rid of ego, rajas and desire which are the seals of ignorance. . . .

I mean by work action done for the Divine and more and more in union with the Divine — for the Divine alone and nothing else. . . .

Works done in this spirit are quite as effective as bhakti or contemplation. One

gets by the rejection of desire, rajas and ego a quietude and purity into which the Peace ineffable can descend; one gets by the dedication of one's will to the Divine, by the merging of one's will in the Divine Will the death of ego and the enlarging into the cosmic consciousness or else the uplifting into what is above the cosmic; one experiences the separation of Purusha from Prakriti and is liberated from the shackles of the outer nature; one becomes aware of one's inner being and sees the outer as an instrument; one feels the universal Force doing one's works and the Self or Purusha watching or witness but free; one feels all one's works taken from one and done by the universal or supreme Mother or by the Divine Power controlling and acting from behind the heart. By constant referring of all one's will and works to the Divine, love and adoration grow, the psychic being comes forward. By the reference to the Power above, we can come to feel it above and its descent and the opening to an increasing consciousness and knowledge. Finally, works, bhakti and knowledge go together and self-perfection becomes possible — what we call the transformation of the nature. . . .

(S 23: 528-29)

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A play of self-concealing and self-finding

A manifestation of this kind, self-creation or Lila, would not seem justifiable if it were imposed on the unwilling creature; but it will be evident that the assent of the embodied spirit must be there already, for Prakriti cannot act without the assent of the Purusha. There must have been not only the will of the Divine Purusha to make the cosmic creation possible, but the assent of the individual Purusha to make the individual manifestation possible. But it may be said that the reason for the Divine Will and delight in such a difficult and tormented progressive manifestation and the reason for the soul's assent to it is still a mystery. But it is not altogether a mystery if we look at our own nature and can suppose some kindred movement of being in the beginning as its cosmic origin. On the contrary, a play of self-concealing and self-finding is one of the most strenuous joys that conscious being can give to itself, a play of extreme attractiveness. There is no greater pleasure for man himself than a victory which is in its very principle a conquest over difficulties, a victory in knowledge, a victory in power, a victory in creation over the impossibilities of creation, a delight in the conquest over an anguished toil and a hard ordeal of suffering. At the end of separation is the intense joy of union, the joy of a meeting with a self from which we were divided. There is an attraction in ignorance itself because it provides us with the joy of discovery, the surprise of new and unforeseen creation, a great adventure of the soul; there is a joy of the journey and the search and the finding, a joy of the battle and the crown, the labour and the reward of

labour. If delight of existence be the secret of creation, this too is one delight of existence; it can be regarded as the reason or at least one reason of this apparently paradoxical and contrary Lila. But, apart from this choice of the individual Purusha, there is a deeper truth inherent in the original Existence which finds its expression in the plunge into Inconscience; its result is a new affirmation of Sachchidananda in its apparent opposite. If the Infinite's right of various self-manifestation is granted, this too as a possibility of its manifestation is intelligible and has its profound significance.

(C 21: 426-27)

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Consent of Purusha and Prakriti for the supramental transformation

But this highest condition [*the supramental transformation*] is difficult and must evidently take long to bring about; for the participation and consent of the Purusha to the transition is not sufficient, there must be also the consent and participation of the Prakriti. It is not only the central thought and will that have to acquiesce, but all the parts of our being must assent and surrender to the law of the spiritual Truth; all has to learn to obey the government of the conscious Divine Power in the members. . . . the law of participation and the law of surrender are imperative; at each step of the transition the assent of the Purusha is needed and there must be too the consent of each part of the nature to the action of the higher power for its change. There must be then a conscious self-direction of the mental being in us towards this change, this substitution of Supernature for the old nature, this transcendence. The rule of conscious obedience to the higher truth of the spirit, the surrender of the whole being to the light and power that come from the Supernature, is a second condition which has to be accomplished slowly and with difficulty by the being itself before the supramental transformation can become at all possible. . . .

(C 22: 962-63)

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Liberating Soul and Nature into the Divine

The supramental Yoga is a path of integral seeking of the Divine by which all that we are is in the end liberated out of the Ignorance and its undivine formations into a truth beyond the Mind, a truth not only of highest spiritual status but of a dynamic spiritual self-manifestation in the universe.

The object of this Yoga is not to liberate the soul from Nature, but to liberate both soul and nature by sublimation into the Divine Consciousness from whom they came.

The aim of the ordinary Yoga is to liberate the soul from Nature or, perhaps sometimes, to liberate the soul in Nature.

Our aim is to liberate both soul and nature into the Divine. Our aim is to pass from the Ignorance into the Divine Light, from death into Immortality, from Desire into self-existent Bliss, from limited human-animal consciousness into all-consciousness and God-consciousness, from the ignorant seeking of Mind into the self-existent knowledge of Supermind, from obscure half animal life into luminous God-force, from the material consciousness [*sentence not completed*]

(C 12: 366-67)

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First steps of supermanhood

That which thou hast to transcend is the self that thou appearest to be, and that is man as thou knowest him, the apparent Purusha. And what is this man? He is a mental being enslaved to life and matter; and where he is not enslaved to life and matter, he is the slave of his mind. But this is a great and heavy servitude; for to be the slave of mind is to be the slave of the false, the limited and the apparent. The self that thou hast to become, is the self that thou art within behind the veil of mind and life and matter. It is to be the spiritual, the divine, the superman, the real Purusha. For that which is above the mental being, is the superman. It is to be the master of thy mind, thy life and thy body; it is to be a king over Nature of whom thou art now the tool, lifted above her who now has thee under her feet. It is to be free and not a slave, to be one and not divided, to be immortal and not obscured by death, to be full of light and not darkened, to be full of bliss and not the sport of grief and suffering, to be uplifted into power and not cast down into weakness. It is to live in the Infinite and possess the finite. It is to live in God and be one with him in his being. To become thyself is to be this and all that flows from it.

Be free in thyself, and therefore free in thy mind, free in thy life and thy body. For the Spirit is freedom.

Be one with God and all beings; live in thyself and not in thy little ego. For the Spirit is unity.

Be thyself, immortal, and put not thy faith in death; for death is not of thyself, but of thy body. For the Spirit is immortality.

To be immortal is to be infinite in being and consciousness and bliss; for the Spirit is infinite and that which is finite lives only by his infinity.

These things thou art, therefore thou canst become all this; but if thou wert not these things, then thou couldst never become them. What is within thee, that alone can be revealed in thy being. Thou appearest indeed to be other than this, but wherefore shouldst thou enslave thyself to appearances?

Rather arise, transcend thyself, become thyself. Thou art man and the whole nature of man is to become more than himself. He was the man-animal, he has become more than the animal man. He is the thinker, the craftsman, the seeker after beauty. He shall be more than the thinker, he shall be the seer of knowledge; he shall be more than the craftsman, he shall be the creator and master of his creation; he shall be more than the seeker of beauty, for he shall enjoy all beauty and all delight. Physical, he seeks for his immortal substance; vital he seeks after immortal life and the infinite power of his being; mental and partial in knowledge, he seeks after the whole light and the utter vision.

To possess these is to become the superman; for it is to rise out of mind into the supermind. Call it the divine mind or Knowledge or the supermind; it is the power and light of the divine will and the divine consciousness. By the supermind the Spirit saw and created himself in the worlds, by that he lives in them and governs them. By that he is Swarat Samrat, self-ruler and all-ruler.

Supermind is superman; therefore to rise beyond mind is the condition.

To be the superman is to live the divine life, to be a god; for the gods are the powers of God. Be a power of God in humanity.

To live in the divine Being and let the consciousness and bliss, the will and knowledge of the Spirit possess thee and play with thee and through thee, this is the meaning.

This is the transfiguration of thyself on the mountain. It is to discover God in thyself and reveal him to thyself in all things. Live in his being, shine with his light, act with his power, rejoice with his bliss. Be that Fire and that Sun and that Ocean. Be that joy and that greatness and that beauty.

When thou hast done this even in part, thou hast attained to the first steps of supermanhood.

(C 12: 150-52)



The Absolute, the Perfect, the Alone
 Has called out of the Silence his mute Force
 Where she lay in the featureless and formless hush
 Guarding from Time by her immobile sleep
 The ineffable puissance of his solitude.
 The Absolute, the Perfect, the Alone
 Has entered with his silence into space:
 He has fashioned these countless persons of one self;
 He has built a million figures of his power;
 He lives in all, who lived in his Vast alone;
 Space is himself and Time is only he.
 The Absolute, the Perfect, the Immune,
 One who is in us as our secret self,
 Our mask of imperfection has assumed,
 He has made this tenement of flesh his own,
 His image in the human measure cast
 That to his divine measure we might rise;
 Then in a figure of divinity
 The Maker shall recast us and impose
 A plan of godhead on the mortal's mould
 Lifting our finite minds to his infinite,
 Touching the moment with eternity.
 This transfiguration is earth's due to heaven:
 A mutual debt binds man to the Supreme:
 His nature we must put on as he put ours;
 We are sons of God and must be even as he:
 His human portion, we must grow divine.
 Our life is a paradox with God for key.

The problem finally reduces itself almost to this: to replace the mental government of intelligence by the government of a spiritualised consciousness.

. . . When the body is subject to rules, even if they are broad, even if they are comprehensive, it is the slave of these rules, and its possibilities are limited by these rules. But when it is governed by the Spirit and the Consciousness, that gives it an incomparable possibility and flexibility. . . . it means the replacement of the intellectual government of the mind by the government of the Spirit, of the Consciousness — the Consciousness. . . . All the laws, these laws that were laws of Nature, have lost all their despotism, one might say; it is no longer as before. It is enough to be always, always supple, attentive and . . . “responsive” to the influence of the Consciousness — the Consciousness in its omnipotence — to pass through all that, with an extraordinary suppleness.

That is the discovery which is being made more and more.

It is wonderful, is it not? It is a wonderful discovery.

It is like a progressive victory over all the imperatives. Thus all laws of Nature, naturally, all the human laws, all the habits, all the rules, all that becomes supple and ends by being nonexistent. And yet one can maintain a regular rhythm that facilitates action — it is not contrary to this suppleness. But it is a suppleness in the execution, in the adaptation, that comes in and changes everything. . . .

So, one sees: as the process becomes more and more perfect — “perfect” means integral, total, leaving nothing behind — it is necessarily, inevitably, the victory over death. Not that the dissolution of cells which death represents does not exist, but it will exist only when it will be necessary: not as an absolute law, but as *one* of the procedures, when it is necessary.

Above all, it is this: all that the Mind has brought of the rigid, the absolute, the almost invincible . . . will disappear. And simply that, by transferring the supreme power to the Supreme Consciousness.

Perhaps it is that which the ancient seers meant when they spoke of transferring the power of Nature or the power of Prakriti to Purusha, transferring it from Prakriti to Purusha. It is perhaps that which they expressed in this way.

THE MOTHER

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