

The answer to ‘what do I do?’ always sounds painfully inadequate to a person who wants immediate relief from pain. Problems seldom come out as easily as teeth, and even pulling teeth is an effort, as I know because I’ve done it. I stick a probe into a bad tooth and the patient screams. “It hurts”, say I. “I didn’t need you to tell me that” says the patient, “and you’ve made it hurt more. Previously I could forget about it, but now it’s hurting so much you must pull it out.” “Sorry”, I reply, “but you must pull it out.” “How?” yells the patient, wanting to murder me. “Work away at it with your fingers until it gets loose” is the answer. “But it hurts!”. “That’s what I told you in the first place”, I say, and the patient feels thoroughly frustrated.

Working the tooth loose with the fingers is a version of the five-finger exercise: WHAT-IS-WRONG-WITH-ME. And when every deep rooted concretion of ideas in one’s head is wrong, the problem is to know where to start – obviously either with the one that hurts most, or the one that it looses. Or, to change the metaphor, take the first loose end in the tangled ball of string and worry away at it. The most difficult thing of all is that the knots and the results from opening knots are so bloody intangible, whereas the effects of being knotted up are so practically painful.

Worst of all, the process is apt to be so slow that it gets disheartening. And that’s why one of the major issues is one’s

readiness to go on, and to go on going on, whether there are any obvious results or not. And that, again, is why one has to spend a lot of time in just holding to Thakur, or Guru, or the centre, or anything else one likes to call The Thing, because that is the only place from which the strength can come to go on going on.