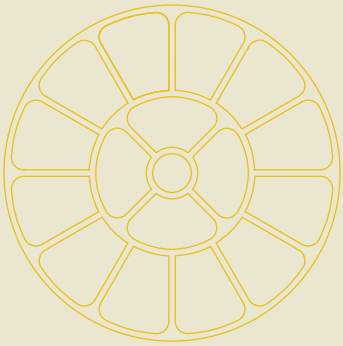

THE MOTHER

Questions and Answers 1957-1958

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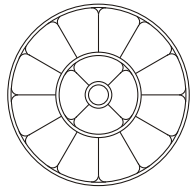

The Mother

Questions and Answers
1957 - 1958

Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry

VOLUME 9
COLLECTED WORKS OF THE MOTHER

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Publisher's Note

This volume contains the conversations of the Mother in 1957 and 1958 with the members of her Wednesday evening French class, held at the Ashram Playground. The class was composed of sadhaks of the Ashram and students of the Ashram's school. The Mother usually began by reading out a passage from a French translation of one of Sri Aurobindo's writings; she then commented on it or invited questions. For most of 1957 the Mother discussed the second part of *Thoughts and Glimpses* and the essays in *The Supramental Manifestation upon Earth*. From October 1957 to November 1958 she took up two of the final chapters of *The Life Divine*. These conversations comprise the last of the Mother's "Wednesday classes", which began in 1950. Further information on the conversations and their publication is provided in the Note on the Text.

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Questions and Answers
1957–58

2 January 1957

"If Brahman were only an impersonal abstraction eternally contradicting the apparent fact of our concrete existence, cessation would be the right end of the matter; but love and delight and self-awareness have also to be reckoned.

"The universe is not merely a mathematical formula for working out the relation of certain mental abstractions called numbers and principles to arrive in the end at a zero or a void unit, neither is it merely a physical operation embodying a certain equation of forces. It is the delight of a Self-lover, the play of a Child, the endless self-multiplication of a Poet intoxicated with the rapture of His own power of endless creation.

"We may speak of the Supreme as if He were a mathematician working out a cosmic sum in numbers or a thinker resolving by experiment a problem in relations of principles and the balance of forces: but also we should speak of Him as if He were a lover, a musician of universal and particular harmonies, a child, a poet. The side of thought is not enough; the side of delight too must be entirely grasped: Ideas, Forces, Existences, Principles are hollow moulds unless they are filled with the breath of God's delight.

"These things are images, but all is an image. Abstractions give us the pure conception of God's truths; images give us their living reality.

"If Idea embracing Force begot the worlds, Delight of Being begot the Idea. Because the Infinite conceived an innumerable delight in itself, therefore worlds and universes came into existence.

"Consciousness of being and Delight of being are

the first parents. Also, they are the last transcendences. Unconsciousness is only an intermediate swoon of the conscious or its obscure sleep; pain and self-extinction are only delight of being running away from itself in order to find itself elsewhere or otherwise.

"Delight of being is not limited in Time; it is without end or beginning. God comes out from one form of things only to enter into another.

"What is God after all? An eternal child playing an eternal game in an eternal garden."

Thoughts and Glimpses, SABCL, Vol. 16, pp. 380–81

Sweet Mother, can one go out of Time and Space?

If one goes out of the manifestation.

It is the fact of objectivisation, of manifestation which has created time and space. To go out of it one must return to the origin, that is, go out of the manifestation. Otherwise from the very first objectivisation time and space were created.

There is a feeling or a perception or an experience of eternity and infinity in which one has the impression of going out of time and space.... It is only an impression.

One must pass beyond all forms, even the most subtle forms of consciousness, far beyond the forms of thought, the forms of consciousness, to be able to have this impression of being outside space and time. This is what generally happens to people who enter into samadhi — the true samadhi — and when they come back to their normal consciousness, they don't remember anything, for, in fact, there was nothing they could remember. This is what Sri Aurobindo says here: If Brahman were only an impersonal abstraction, the one reasonable end would be annihilation. For it is obvious that if one goes out of time and space, all separate existence automatically ceases.

There, now. So one *can*, without much result!

Is that all? Have you tried to go out of time and space?

(*The child shakes his head vigorously.*)

Mother will you explain the New Year Message? What is the meaning of: "It is not a crucified but a glorified body that will save the world?"[1]

I am going to tell you something, you will understand.

One day, I don't know when exactly, I suddenly remembered that I had to give a message for the year. Usually these messages reveal what is going to happen during the year, and as I had nothing to say, for certain reasons, I asked myself, or rather I asked whether I might receive a clear indication of what was to be said. I asked exactly this: what was the best state in the world, and the thing which could help these people or this state of consciousness to draw a little closer to the truth?

What was the best state?

A few hours later I had a booklet in my hands which had come from America and had been published as a kind of account of a photographic exhibition entitled "The Family of Man". There were quotations in this booklet and the reproduction of a number of photographs, classified according to the subject, and all for the purpose of trying to awaken the true sense of fraternity in men. The whole thing represented a sort of effort — immense, pathetic — to prevent a possible war. The quotations had been chosen by a woman-reporter who had come here and whom I had seen. And so, all this came expressing in a really touching way, the best human will which can manifest on earth at present, from the collective point of view. I am not saying that some individuals have not risen much higher and understand much better, but they are individual cases and not a collective attempt to do something for humanity. I was moved.

And then I came to the end of their booklet and to the remedy they in their ignorant goodwill suggested to prevent men

[1] "A Power greater than that of Evil can alone win the Victory. It is not a crucified but a glorified body that will save the world."

from killing one another.... It was so poor, so weak, so ignorant, so ineffective, that I was truly moved and — I had a dream, that this exhibition would come here, to Pondicherry, that we could show it and add a concluding fascicule to their booklet in which the true remedy would be revealed to them. And all that took shape very concretely, with the kind of photographs which would be necessary, the quotations that should be put, and then, quite decisively, like something welling up from the depths of consciousness, came this sentence. I wrote it down, and as soon as it was written I said to myself: "Why, this is my message." And it was decided it would be this. So there it is.

This means that it is just the thing which can make the goodwill of mankind, the best being expressed on earth today, progress. It has taken a rather special form because this goodwill came from a Christian country and naturally there was quite a special Christian influence, but this is an attitude which is found everywhere in the world, differently expressed according to the country and the religion, and it was as a reaction against the ignorance of this attitude that I wrote this. Naturally, there is the same idea in India, this idea of the complete renunciation of all physical reality, the profound contempt for the material world which is considered an illusion and a falsehood, that leaves, as Sri Aurobindo used to say, the field free to the sovereign sway of the adverse forces. If you escape from the concrete reality to seek a distant and abstract one, you leave the whole field of concrete realisation at the full disposal of the adverse forces — which have taken hold of it and more or less govern it now — in order to go away yourself to realise what Sri Aurobindo calls here a zero or a void unit — to become the sovereign of a nought. It is the return into Nirvana. This idea is everywhere in the world but expresses itself in different forms.

Because until now evil has been opposed by weakness, by a spiritual force without any power for transformation in the material world, this tremendous effort of goodwill has ended only in deplorable failure and left the world in the same state

of misery and corruption and falsehood. It is on the *same* plane as the one where the adverse forces are ruling that one must have a greater power than theirs, a power which can conquer them totally *in that very domain*. To put it otherwise, a spiritual force which would be capable of transforming both the consciousness and the material world. This force is the supramental force. What is necessary is to be receptive to its action on the physical plane, and not to run away into a distant Nirvana leaving the enemy with full power over what one abandons.

It is neither sacrifice nor renunciation nor weakness which can bring the victory. It is only Delight, a delight which is strength, endurance, supreme courage. The delight brought by the supramental force. It is much more difficult than giving everything up and running away, it demands an infinitely greater heroism — but that is the only way to conquer.

Nothing else? I have some questions here, but now it is rather late.

Mother, this new force which is going to act, will it act through individual effort or independently of it?

Why this opposition? It acts independently of all individual effort, as if automatically in the world, but it *creates* individual effort and *makes use* of it. Individual effort is one of its means of action, and perhaps the most powerful. If one thinks that individual effort is due to the individual, it is an illusion, but if the individual under the pretext that there is a universal action independent of himself refuses to make an individual effort, he refuses to give his collaboration. The Force wants to use, and does in fact use individual effort as one of the most powerful means at its disposal. It is the Force itself, it is this Power which *is* your individual effort.

And so, you see, the first movement of vital self-conceit when it is told, "You don't exist in yourself", naturally it says,

"All right, I won't do anything any more! I am not the one who works, so I won't work any longer" and "Very good, the Divine can do everything, it is his business, I won't stir any more. If the credit does not go to me" — it comes to that — "I won't do anything any more." Well! But indeed there's no word for such things. This is something I constantly hear, it is simply a way of venting one's offended self-conceit, that's all. But the true reaction, the pure reaction is an enthusiastic impulse of collaboration, to play the game with all the energy, the will-power at the disposal of one's consciousness, in the state one is in, with the feeling of being supported, carried by something infinitely greater than oneself, which makes no mistakes, something which protects you and at the same time gives you all the necessary strength and uses you as the best instrument. And one feels that, and one feels one is working in security, that one can no longer make any mistakes, that what one does is done with the utmost result and — in delight. That is the true movement; to feel that one's will is intensified to the utmost because it is no longer a tiny little microscopic person in infinity but an infinite universal Power which makes you act: the Force of Truth. This is the only true reaction.

The other one — miserable. "Ah! I am not the one who is doing things, ah! it is not my will being expressed, ah! it is not my power that is working... so I lie down flat, stretch myself out in inert passivity and I won't move." "Very well, then," one tells the Divine, "do whatever you like, I don't exist any longer." That is poor indeed! There.

9 January 1957

"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 greater 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."

Thoughts and Glimpses, SABCL, Vol. 16, p. 382

According to what Sri Aurobindo says here, the reality of the universe is what is called God or godhead, but essentially it is Delight. The universe is created in Delight and for Delight. But this Delight can exist only in the perfect oneness of the creation with its creator, and Sri Aurobindo describes this oneness as the Possessor — that is, the Creator — the Possessor being possessed by his creation, a sort of reciprocal possession which is the very essence of the Oneness and the source of all delight.

And it is because of division — because the Possessor no longer possesses and because the possessed no longer possesses the Possessor, division is created and the essential Delight is changed into ignorance, and this ignorance is the cause of all suffering. "Ignorance", not in the sense in which it is usually

understood, for that is what Sri Aurobindo calls Nescience: that ignorance is a consequence of the other. True ignorance is ignorance of the oneness, the union, the identity. And that is the cause of all suffering.

Ever since division began and creation lost its direct contact with the Creator, ignorance has reigned, and all suffering is its result.

All those who have had the inner experience have had this experience, that the moment one re-establishes the union with the divine source, all suffering disappears. But there has been a very persistent movement, about which I spoke to you last week, which put at the source of creation not this essential divine Delight but desire. This delight of creation, self-manifestation, self-expression — there is an entire line of seekers and sages who have considered it not as a delight but as a desire; the whole line of Buddhism is of this kind. And instead of seeing the solution in a Oneness which restores to us the essential Delight of the manifestation and the becoming, they consider that the goal and also the way are a total rejection of all desire to be and a return to annihilation.

This conception amounts to an essential misunderstanding. The methods recommended for self-liberation are methods of development which can be very useful, but this conception of a world that's essentially bad, for it is the result of desire, and from which one must escape at all costs and as quickly as possible, has been the greatest and most serious distortion of all spiritual life in the history of mankind.

It might have been useful, perhaps, at a particular time, for everything is useful in the world's history, but this utility has passed, it is outworn, and it is time for this conception to be superseded and for us to return to a more essential and higher Truth, to go back to the Delight of existence, the Joy of union and manifestation of the Divine.

This new orientation — I mean new in its terrestrial realisation — must replace all the former spiritual orientations and

open the way to the new realisation which will be a supramental realisation. That is why I told you last week that only Delight, the true divine Delight can bring about the Victory.

Naturally, there must be no confusion about what this Delight is, and that is why from the beginning Sri Aurobindo puts us on our guard, telling us that it is only when one has passed beyond enjoyings that one can enter into Bliss. Bliss is precisely that state which comes from the manifestation of this Delight. But it is quite the opposite of all that is usually called joy and pleasure, and these must be completely given up in order to have the other.

(*To a child*) Do you have a question?

I have a question, but we haven't read that yet.

What is it?

It is about God and Nature.

So ?

Why do God and Nature "run from each other when glimpsed"?[1]

In order to play. He says so: "They are at play." It is in play.

(A young disciple) *Mother, does Nature know it is a game? God knows it is a game, but does Nature know it?*

I think Nature knows it too, it is only man who does not know!

[1] "God and Nature are like a boy and a 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."
Thoughts and Glimpses, SABCL, Vol. 16, p. 382

(Another child) *Sweet Mother, where can Nature hide?*

Where can she hide? She hides in the inconscience, my child. That is the greatest hiding-place, the inconscience. Besides, God also hides in the inconscience.

Perhaps, when one knows it is a game and plays it for fun, it is amusing. But when one doesn't know it is a game, it is not amusing. You see, it is only when one is on the other side, on the divine side, that one can see it like that; that is, as long as we are in the ignorance, well, inevitably we suffer from what should amuse and please us. Fundamentally, it comes to this: when one does something deliberately, knowing what one is doing, it is very interesting and may even be very amusing. But when it is something you don't do deliberately and don't understand, when it is something imposed on you and endured, it is not pleasant. So the solution, the one which is always given: you must learn, know, do it deliberately. But to tell you my true feeling, I think it would be much better to change the game.... When one is in that state, one can smile, understand and even be amused, but when one sees, when one is conscious of all those who, far from knowing that they are playing, take the game very seriously and find it rather unpleasant, well... I don't know, one would prefer it to change. That is a purely personal opinion.

I know very well: the moment one crosses over to the other side... instead of being underneath and enduring, when one is above and not only observes but acts oneself, it is so total a reversal that it is difficult to recall the state one was in when carrying all the weight of this inconscience, this ignorance on one's back, when one was enduring things without knowing why or how or where one was going or why it was like that. One forgets all that. And then one can say: it is an "eternal game in an eternal garden". But for it to be an amusing game, everybody should be able to play the game knowing the rules of the game; as long as one does not know the rules of the game, it is not pleasant. So the solution you are given is: "But learn the

rules of the game!"... That is not within everybody's reach.

I have the impression, a very powerful impression, that a practical joker came and spoilt the game and made it into something dramatic, and this practical joker is obviously the cause of the division and the ignorance which is the result of this division, and of the suffering which is the result of ignorance. Indeed, in spite of all the spiritual traditions, it is difficult to conceive that this state of division, ignorance and suffering was foreseen at the beginning of creation. In spite of everything, one doesn't like to think that it could have been foreseen. Indeed, I refuse to believe it. I call it an accident — a rather terrible accident, but still, you see, it is especially terrible to the human consciousness; for the universal consciousness, it may only be quite a reparable accident. And after all, when it has been set right, we shall even be able to recall it and say, "Ah! it has given us something we wouldn't have had otherwise." But we must first wait for it to be put right.

Anyway, I don't know if there are people who say that it was foreseen and willed, but I tell you it was neither foreseen nor willed, and this is precisely why when it happened, quite unexpectedly, immediately something else sprang forth from the Source, which probably would not have manifested if this accident had not taken place. If Delight had remained Delight, conceived as Delight, and everything had come about in Delight and Union instead of in division, there would never have been any need for the divine Consciousness to plunge into the inconscience as Love. So, when one sees this from very far and from high above, one says, "After all, something has perhaps been gained from it." But one must see it from a great distance and a great height to be able to say that. Or rather, when it is left far behind, when one has gone beyond this state, entered into Union and Delight, when division and inconscience and suffering have disappeared, then one may very wisely say, "Ah, yes, we have gained an experience we would never have had otherwise." But the experience must be behind, we must not be right in the midst

of it. For, even for someone who — this is something I know — even for someone who has come out of this state, who lives in the consciousness of Oneness, for whom ignorance is something external, no longer something intimate and painful, even for that person it is impossible to look on the suffering of all those who have not come out of it with a smile of indifference. That seems impossible to me. Therefore, it is really necessary that things in the world should change and the acute state of sickness should disappear, so that we can say, "Ah! yes, we have benefited by it." It is true that something has been gained, but it is a very costly gain.

That is why, I believe, because of that, so many initiates and sages have been attracted by the solution of the void, of Nirvana, for this is obviously a very radical way of escaping from the consequences of an ignorant manifestation.

Only, the solution of changing this manifestation into a true, truly divine reality is a far superior solution. And this is what we want to attempt now, with a certitude of succeeding one day or another, for, in spite of everything, despite everything, what is true is eternally true, and what is true in essence must necessarily become true in the realisation, one day or another. Sri Aurobindo told us that we had taken the first step on the path and that the time had come to accomplish the work, therefore one has only to set out. That's all.

So, your question? (*To the child who asked about the game of hide-and-seek*) Was this what you wanted to know?

Actually what you were asking was: Why this image?

Yes.

One could reverse the thing. Instead of saying that the universe is like this, that is, the Divine and man are like this, look like this, one should say that this is perhaps an outer, superficial expression of what the essential relation between the Divine and man is at the present moment.

In fact, this would amount to saying that when one plays one is much more divine than when one is serious! (*Laughing*) But it's not always good to say this. Perhaps there is more divinity in the spontaneous play of children than in the erudition of the scholar or the asceticism of the saint. That's what I have always thought. Only (*smiling*) it is a divinity which is quite unconscious of itself.

As for me, I must confess to you that I feel much more essentially myself when I am joyful and when I play — in my own way — than when I am very grave and very serious — much more. Grave and serious — that always gives me the impression that I am dragging the weight of all this creation, so heavy and so obscure, whereas when I play — when I play, when I can laugh, can enjoy myself — it gives me the feeling of a fine powder of delight falling from above and tinting this creation, this world with a very special colour and bringing it much closer to what it should essentially be.

Mother, when and why are you grave?

Oh! well, you have seen me sometimes, haven't you? Perhaps when I come down a rung, I don't know — when someone is drowning or in difficulty, then one must come down from the bank into the water to pull him out. Perhaps that is the reason. When the creation is in a special difficulty, one comes down a little, one pulls, so one becomes serious. But when all is going well, one can laugh and enjoy oneself.

In fact, it could be said that all preaching, all exhortations, even all prayers and invocations come from what Sri Aurobindo calls the lower hemisphere, that is to say, one is still down below. It may be the summit, may be the frontier, it may be just the edge of this lower hemisphere, but one is still in the lower hemisphere. And as soon as one passes to the other side, all this seems, to say the least, useless and almost childish in the bad sense of the word — ignorant, still ignorant. And it is very interesting to be still in

this state where one is at times on one side, at times just on the border of the other. Well, this border of the other, which for the human consciousness is an almost inaccessible summit, for one who can live consciously and freely in the higher hemisphere, is in spite of everything a descent.

Later I would like us to take up and read here the last chapters of *The Life Divine*. I think you are becoming old enough, mature enough, to be able to follow it. And then there are all kinds of things you will be able to understand and subjects we shall be able to take up, based on this text, which will help us to go one step further, a serious step towards realisation. He describes so precisely and marvellously the difference between these two states of consciousness, how all that seems to man almost the ultimate of perfection, at least of realisation, how all that still belongs to the lower hemisphere, including all the relations with the gods as men have known them and still know them — how all these things are still far below — and what is the true state, the one which he describes as the supramental state, when one passes beyond.

And in fact, as long as one has not consciously passed beyond, there is a whole world of things one cannot understand.

So I would like us now to open the way and pass beyond, all together, a little.

There we are.

16 January 1957

"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."

Thoughts and Glimpses, SABCL, Vol. 16, p. 382

Sweet Mother, how is it that one seeks something and yet does not know that one is seeking?

There are so many things you think, feel, want, even do, without knowing it. Are you fully conscious of yourself and of all that goes on in you? — Not at all! If, for example, suddenly, without your expecting it, at a certain moment I ask you: "What are you thinking about?" your reply, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, will be: "I don't know." And if in the same way I ask another question like this: "What do you want?" you will also say: "I don't know." And "What do you feel?" — "I don't know." It is only to those who are used to observing themselves, watching how they live, who are concentrated upon this need to know what is going on in them, that one can ask a precise question like this, and only they can immediately reply. In some instances in life, yes, one is absorbed in what one feels, thinks, wants, and then one can say, "Yes, I want that, I am thinking of that, I experience that", but these are only moments of existence, not the whole time.

Haven't you noticed that? No?

Well, to find out what one truly is, to find out why one is on earth, what is the purpose of physical existence, of this presence

on earth, of this formation, this existence... the vast majority of people live without asking themselves this even once! Only a small *élite* ask themselves this question with interest, and fewer still start working to get the answer. For, unless one is fortunate enough to come across someone who knows it, it is not such an easy thing to find. Suppose, for instance, that there had never come to your hands a book of Sri Aurobindo's or of any of the writers or philosophers or sages who have dedicated their lives to this quest; if you were in the ordinary world, as millions of people are in the ordinary world, who have never heard of anything, except at times — and not always nowadays, even quite rarely — of some gods and a certain form of religion which is more a habit than a faith and, which, besides, rarely tells you why you are on earth.... Then, one doesn't even think of thinking about it. One lives from day to day the events of each day. When one is very young, one thinks of playing, eating, and a little later of learning, and after that one thinks of all the circumstances of life. But to put this problem to oneself, to confront this problem and ask oneself: "But after all, *why* am I here?" How many do that? There are people to whom this idea comes only when they are facing a catastrophe. When they see someone whom they love die or when they find themselves in particularly painful and difficult circumstances, they turn back upon themselves, if they are sufficiently intelligent, and ask themselves: "But really, what is this tragedy we are living, and what's the use of it and what is its purpose?"

And only at that moment does one begin the search to know.

And it is only when one has found, you see, found what he says, found that one has a divine Self and that consequently one must seek to know this divine Self.... This comes much later, and yet, in spite of everything, from the very moment of birth in a physical body, there is in the being, in its depths, this psychic presence which pushes the whole being towards this fulfilment. But who knows it and recognises it, this psychic being? That too comes only in special circumstances, and unfortunately, most of

the time these have to be painful circumstances, otherwise one goes on living unthinkingly. And in the depths of one's being is this psychic being which seeks, seeks, seeks to awaken the consciousness and re-establish the union. One knows nothing about it.

When you were ten years old, did you know this? No, you didn't. Well, still in the depths of your being your psychic being already wanted it and was seeking for it. It was probably your psychic which brought you here.

There are so many things which happen and you don't even ask yourself why. You take them... it is like that because it is like that. It would be very interesting to know how many of you, till I spoke to you about it, had asked yourselves how it happened that you were here?

Naturally, most of the time, the reply is perhaps very simple: "My parents are here, so I am here." However, you were not born here. Nobody was born here. Not even you, were you? You were born in Bangalore. No one was born here.... And yet, you are all here. You have not asked yourselves why — it was like that because it was like that! And so, between even asking oneself and giving an external reply satisfactory enough to be accepted as final, and then telling oneself, "Perhaps it is an indication of a destiny, of the purpose of my life..." What a long way one must travel to come to that!

And for everybody there are more or less external reasons, which, besides, are not worth much and explain everything in the dullest possible way, but there is a deeper reason which as yet you do not know. And are there many of you who would be very much interested in knowing why they are here? How many of you have asked yourselves this question: "What is the true reason for my being here?"

Have *you* asked yourself the question?

I asked you once, Sweet Mother.

Oh! that's true. And you?... And you?

I don't remember.

You don't remember. And you?

Not before, Mother.

Not before. Now it begins to come! and you?

No.

No.... And I could ask many others still. I know very well. Only those who have come after having had some experience of life and came because they wanted to come, and had a conscious reason for coming, they can of course tell me, "I came because of that", and that would be at least a partial explanation. The truest, deepest reason may still elude them, that is, what they specially have to realise in the Work. That already requires having passed through many stages on the path.

Essentially, it is only when one has become aware of one's soul, has been identified with one's psychic being that one can see in a single flash the picture of one's individual development through the ages. Then indeed one begins to know... but not before. Then, indeed, I assure you it becomes very interesting. It changes one's position in life.

There is such a great difference between feeling vaguely, having a hesitant impression of something, of a force, a movement, an impulse, an attraction, of something which drives you in life — but it is still so vague, so uncertain, it is hazy — there is such a difference between this and having a clear vision, an exact perception, a total understanding of the meaning of one's life. And only then does one begin to see things as they are, not before. Only then can one follow the thread of one's destiny and clearly see the goal and the way to reach it. But that happens

only through successive inner awakenings, like doors opening suddenly on new horizons — truly, a new birth into a truer, deeper, more lasting consciousness.

Until then you live in a cloud, gropingly, under the weight of a destiny which at times crushes you, gives you the feeling of having been made in a certain way and being unable to do anything about it. You are under the burden of an existence which weighs you down, makes you crawl on the ground instead of rising above and seeing all the threads, the guiding threads, the threads which bind different things into a single movement of progression towards a realisation that grows clear.

One must spring up out of this half-consciousness which is usually considered quite natural — this is your "normal" way of being and you do not even draw back from it sufficiently to be able to see and wonder at this incertitude, this lack of precision; while, on the contrary, to know that one is seeking and to seek consciously, deliberately, *steadfastly* and methodically, this indeed is the exceptional, almost "abnormal" condition. And yet only in this way does one begin to truly live.

23 January 1957

"The meeting of man and God must always mean a penetration and entry of the Divine into the human and a self-immergence of man in the Divinity.

"But that immergence is not in the nature of an annihilation. Extinction is not the fulfilment of all this search and passion, suffering and rapture. The game would never have been begun if that were to be its ending.

"Delight is the secret. Learn of pure delight and thou shalt learn of God.

"What then was the commencement of the whole matter? Existence that multiplied itself for sheer delight of being and plunged into numberless trillions of forms so that it might find itself innumerably.

"And what is the middle? Division that strives towards a multiple unity, ignorance that labours towards a flood of varied light, pain that travails towards the touch of an unimaginable ecstasy. For all these things are dark figures and perverse vibrations.

"And what is the end of the whole matter? As if honey could taste itself and all its drops together and all its drops could taste each other and each the whole honeycomb as itself, so should the end be with God and the soul of man and the universe.

"Love is the key-note, Joy is the music, Power is the strain, Knowledge is the performer, the infinite All is the composer and audience. We know only the preliminary discords which are as fierce as the harmony shall be great; but we shall arrive surely at the fugue of the divine Beatitudes."

Thoughts and Glimpses, SABCL, Vol. 16, p. 384

23 January 1957

How can one "learn of pure delight"?

First of all, to begin with, one must through an attentive observation grow aware that desires and the satisfaction of desires give only a vague, uncertain pleasure, mixed, fugitive and altogether unsatisfactory. That is usually the starting-point.

Then, if one is a reasonable being, one must learn to discern what is desire and refrain from doing anything that may satisfy one's desires. One must reject them without trying to satisfy them. And so the first result is exactly one of the first observations stated by the Buddha in his teaching: there is an infinitely greater delight in conquering and eliminating a desire than in satisfying it. Every sincere and steadfast seeker will realise after some time, sooner or later, at times very soon, that this is an absolute truth, and that the delight felt in overcoming a desire is incomparably higher than the small pleasure, so fleeting and mixed, which may be found in the satisfaction of his desires. That is the second step.

Naturally, with this continuous discipline, in a very short time the desires will keep their distance and will no longer bother you. So you will be free to enter a little more deeply into your being and open yourself in an aspiration to... the Giver of Delight, the divine Element, the divine Grace. And if this is done with a sincere self-giving — something that gives itself, offers itself and expects nothing in exchange for its offering — one will feel that kind of sweet warmth, comfortable, intimate, radiant, which fills the heart and is the herald of Delight.

After this, the path is easy.

Sweet Mother, what is the true Delight of being?

That very one of which I am speaking!

Then, Sweet Mother, here when Sri Aurobindo speaks of

an existence "that multiplied itself for sheer delight of being", what is this delight?

The delight of existing.

There comes a time when one begins to be almost ready, when one can feel in everything, every object, in every movement, in every vibration, in all the things around — not only people and conscious beings, but things, objects; not only trees and plants and living things, but simply any object one uses, the things around one — this delight, this delight of being, of being just as one is, simply being. And one sees that all this vibrates like that. One touches a thing and feels this delight. But naturally, I say, one must have followed the discipline I spoke about at the beginning; otherwise, so long as one has a desire, a preference, an attachment or affinities and repulsions and all that, one cannot — one cannot.

And so long as one finds pleasures — pleasure, well, yes, vital or physical pleasure in a thing — one cannot feel this delight. For this delight is everywhere. This delight is something very subtle. One moves in the midst of things and it is as though they were all singing to you their delight. There comes a time when it becomes very familiar in the life around you. Of course, I must admit that it is a little more difficult to feel it in human beings, because there are all their mental and vital formations which come into the field of perception and disturb it. There is too much of this kind of egoistic asperity which gets mixed with things, so it is more difficult to contact the Delight there. But even in animals one feels it; it is already a little more difficult than in plants. But in plants, in flowers, it is so wonderful! They speak all their joy, they express it. And as I said, in all familiar objects, the things around you, which you use, there is a state of consciousness in which each one is happy to be, just as it is. So at that moment one knows one has touched true Delight. And it is not conditioned. I mean it does not depend upon... it depends on nothing. It does not depend on outer circumstances,

does not depend on a more or less favourable state, it does not depend on anything: it is a communion with the *raison d'être* of the universe.

And when this comes it fills all the cells of the body. It is not even a thing which is thought out — one does not reason, does not analyse, it is not that: it is a *state* in which one lives. And when the body shares in it, it is so fresh — so fresh, so spontaneous, so... it no longer turns back upon itself, there is no longer any sense of self-observation, of self-analysis or of analysing things. All that is like a canticle of joyous vibrations, but very, very quiet, without violence, without passion, nothing of all that. It is very subtle and very intense at the same time, and when it comes, it seems that the whole universe is a marvellous harmony. Even what is to the ordinary human consciousness ugly, unpleasant, appears marvellous.

Unfortunately, as I said, people, circumstances, all that, with all those mental and vital formations — that disturbs it all the time. Then one is obliged to return to this ignorant, blind perception of things. But otherwise, as soon as all this stops and one can get out of it... everything changes. As he says there, at the end: everything changes. A marvellous harmony. And it is all Delight, true Delight, real Delight.

This demands a little work.

And this discipline I spoke about, which one must undergo, if it is practised with the aim of finding Delight, the result is delayed, for an egoistic element is introduced into it, it is done with an aim and is no longer an offering, it is a demand, and then.... It comes, it will come, even if it takes much longer — when one asks nothing, expects nothing, hopes for nothing, when it is simply that, it is self-giving and aspiration, and the spontaneous need without any bargaining — the need to be divine, that's all.

Mother, will you explain this "drop of honey"?

Oh! the honey.... But that is an image, my child.

He says: "If one could imagine...." It is simply to give a more concrete approach than intellectual abstractions. He says: If you can imagine, for example, a honeycomb, well... a honeycomb which would have the capacity to taste itself and at the same time each drop of honey; not only to taste itself as honey, but to taste itself in each drop, being each drop of the honeycomb, and if each one of these drops could taste all the others, itself and all the others, and at the same time if each drop could taste, could have the taste of the whole honeycomb as if it were itself.

So, it would be a honeycomb capable of tasting itself and tasting in detail all the drops in the honeycomb, and each drop capable of tasting itself and all the others individually and the honeycomb as a whole, as itself.... It is a very precise image. Only you must have some power of imagination!

Like that I understand. I am asking what it means.

Honey is something delicious, isn't it? So, these are the sweetnesses of divine Delight.

And just now, when I was evoking this joy which is in things, spontaneous, simple, this joy which is at the heart of everything, well, for the physical body it has something truly... oh! naturally, the taste of honey is very crude and gross in comparison — but something like that, something extremely delicious. And very simple, very simple and very integral in its simplicity; very complete in its simplicity and yet very simple.

You see, this is not something to be thought out, one must have the power to evoke it, one must have some imagination. So, if one has this capacity, one can do that simply by reading, then one can understand.... It is an analogy, it is only an analogy, but it is an analogy which truly has a power of evocation.

But everyone will imagine something different, won't he, Mother?

Obviously. But that doesn't matter! It will be good for him.

(*Silence*)

Is that all?

I had brought some questions I have been asked, but I think it is already rather late. (*Mother glances at some questions.*)

There is one which is terribly intellectual which we shall leave for another day. There is another... which is only a semblance, and then there is a third which is interesting but needs a detailed reply, and this evening it is already a little late.

However here is a question which can be answered very easily, it is from one of my own writings where it is said:

> *"It is a great mistake to suppose that the Divine Will always acts openly in the world."*

And then in Sri Aurobindo's *Synthesis of Yoga*:

> *"If we see unity everywhere, if we recognise that all comes by the divine will... etc."*

And something else, from my *Prayers and Meditations*:

> *"It is Thou who art the doer in each thing and each being, and he who is near enough to Thee to see Thee in all actions without exception, will know how to transform each act into a benediction."*
>
> *10 December 1912*

And so, I am asked how to reconcile these contradictions. But I don't see any contradiction. For in the first sentence it is said: "It is a great mistake to suppose that the Divine Will always acts openly in the world...." I should say: it is *extremely rare* for it to act openly. It always acts, but not openly. And when it acts

openly, that is what men call "miracles". And it is something extremely rare. Most of the time it does not act openly, but that doesn't mean it does not act. It doesn't act openly, that's all. So there's no contradiction. That was all I meant. It is an altogether superficial contradiction arising from a misunderstanding of the words.

The Divine Will acts, but not openly. When it acts openly, well, men call that miracles. That's all. But that does not prevent it from acting.

30 January 1957

"The whole world yearns after freedom, yet each creature is in love with his chains; this is the first paradox and inextricable knot of our nature.

"Man is in love with the bonds of birth; therefore he is caught in the companion bonds of death. In these chains he aspires after freedom of his being and mastery of his self-fulfilment.

"Man is in love with power; therefore he is subjected to weakness. For the world is a sea of waves of force that meet and continually fling themselves on each other; he who would ride on the crest of one wave, must faint under the shock of hundreds.

"Man is in love with pleasure; therefore he must undergo the yoke of grief and pain. For unmixed delight is only for the free and passionless soul; but that which pursues after pleasure in man is a suffering and straining energy.

"Man hungers after calm, but he thirsts also for the experiences of a restless mind and a troubled heart. Enjoyment is to his mind a fever, calm an inertia and a monotony.

"Man is in love with the limitations of his physical being, yet he would have also the freedom of his infinite mind and his immortal soul.

"And in these contrasts something in him finds a curious attraction; they constitute for his mental being the artistry of life. It is not only the nectar but the poison also that attracts his taste and his curiosity."

Thoughts and Glimpses, SABCL, Vol. 16, p. 385

Sweet Mother, what does "artistry" mean?

What most men call "artistry" is just contrast. Artists say and feel that it is the shadows which make the light, that if there were no contrasts, they would not be able to make a picture. It is the same thing with music: the contrast between "forte" and "piano" is one of the greatest charms of music.

I knew some poets who used to say, "It is my enemies' hatred which makes me value the affection of my friends...." And it is the almost inevitable likelihood of misfortune which gives all its savour to happiness, and so on. And they value repose only in contrast with the daily agitation, silence only because of the usual noise, and some of them even tell you, "Oh! it is because there are illnesses that good health is cherished." It goes so far that a thing is valued only when it is lost. And as Sri Aurobindo says here: When this fever of action, of movement, this agitation of creative thought is not there, one feels one is falling into inertia. Most people fear silence, calm, quietude. They no longer feel alive when they are not agitated.

I have seen many cases in which Sri Aurobindo had given silence to somebody, had made his mind silent, and that person came back to him in a kind of despair, saying: "But I have become stupid!" For his thought was no longer excited.

What he says here is terribly true. Men want freedom but they are in love with their chains, and when one wants to take them away, when one wants to show them the path of true liberation, they are afraid, and often they even protest.

Almost all man's works of art — literary, poetic, artistic — are based on the violence of contrasts in life. When one tries to pull them out of their daily dramas, they really feel that it is not artistic. If they wanted to write a book or compose a play where there would be no contrasts, where there would be no shadows in the picture, it would probably be something seemingly very dull, very monotonous, lifeless, for what man calls "life" is the drama of life, the anxiety of life, the violence of contrasts. And

perhaps if there were no death, they would be terribly tired of living.

(*Long silence*)

I have been asked a question about what I said in one of the former classes:

> *"The difficulties and obstacles met on the path when one wants to attain a certain aim — are they sometimes a sign that this decision, this plan or project was faulty from the beginning and that hence one should not persist or, on the contrary, do these difficulties indicate a victory to be won, a transformation to be attained? Are they a sign that one must persevere and hold fast? I am not speaking here of the decision to follow the path of Yoga, but of the little things connected with work, sports or other activities. In other words, how to recognise and interpret the Guidance which comes through circumstances or relations with others and through experience?"*

I believe this is only an apparent contradiction.

If one wants to follow a discipline of yoga, naturally, before undertaking anything one must try to discern and know if the inspiration received is a real one, coming from the Divine, or whether it is simply a reaction to outer circumstances and an impulse, either vital or mental. It is quite important, even very important, to try to discern and act in full knowledge of the cause. But there are very many things one does and about which one is not in the habit of thinking beforehand. When the circumstance comes, one obeys it, so to say. And, indeed, these things, like almost everything one does in life, are not important in themselves. The only thing that matters is the *attitude* with which they are done. The fact that you do something because that action is present there before you for one reason or another

and that you are, so to say, always obliged to act as long as you are in the outer life — all this has a certain importance from the point of view of the management of life if these acts are liable to have far-reaching consequences in life, as for example, getting married or going to live in one place or another or taking up one occupation or another; these things are generally considered important, and they are so to a certain extent; but even for them, from the point of view of yoga, everything depends much more on the attitude one takes than on the thing itself. And so, above all, for all the very small actions of daily life, the importance is reduced to a minimum.

There are some scrupulous people who set problems to themselves and find it very difficult to solve them, because they state the problem wrongly. I knew a young woman who was a theosophist and was trying to practise; she told me, "We are taught that the divine Will must prevail in all that we do, but in the morning when I have my breakfast, how can I know whether God wants me to put two lumps of sugar in my coffee or only one?"... And it was quite touching, you know, and I had some trouble explaining to her that the spirit in which she drank her coffee, the attitude she had towards her food, was much more important than the number of lumps of sugar she put into it.[1]

It is the same with all the little things one does at every moment. The divine Consciousness does not work in the human way, It does not decide how many lumps of sugar you will put in your coffee. It gradually puts you in the right attitude towards actions, things — an attitude of consecration, suppleness, assent, aspiration, goodwill, plasticity, effort for progress — and this is what counts, much more than the small decision you take at every second. One may try to find out what is the truest thing to do, but it is not by a mental discussion or a mental problem that these things can be resolved. It is in fact by an inner

[1] About this story, a disciple remembers Mother telling him something to this effect: "Now I would no longer laugh at this poor lady. I am not sure that the Lord does not also attend to the number of lumps of sugar we put in our coffee!"

attitude which *creates* an atmosphere of harmony — progressive harmony — in which all one does will necessarily be the best thing that could be done in those particular circumstances. And the ideal would be an attitude complete enough for the action to be spontaneous, dictated by something other than an outer reason. But that is an ideal — for which one must aspire and which one can realise after some time. Till then, to take care always to keep the true attitude, the true aspiration, is much more important than to decide whether one will do gymnastic-marching or not and whether one will go to a certain class or not. Because these things have no real importance in themselves, they have only an altogether relative importance, the only important thing is just to keep the true orientation in one's aspiration and a living will for progress.

As a general rule, and so that the experience may have its full benefit, when one has undertaken something one must do it with persistence, without caring for obstacles and difficulties, until an absolutely irrefutable event indicates that one no longer has to do it. This happens very rarely. Usually, things follow their own curve and when they reach an issue — either they have come to an end or have produced the desired result — one becomes aware of the reason for doing them. But the obstacles, oppositions — or encouragements — should not be considered as irrefutable signs to be followed, for these things may have very different meanings according to the case, and it is not at all on the basis of these outer events that one must judge the validity of one's undertaking.

When one is very attentive and very sincere, one can have an indication, an inner but perceptible indication, of the value of what one has undertaken or the action one is doing. Truly, for someone who has an entire goodwill, that is, who in all sincerity, with the whole conscious part of his being, wants to do the right thing in the right way, there is always an indication; if for some reason or other one launches upon a more or less fatal action, one *always* feels an uneasiness in the region of the solar

plexus; an uneasiness which is not violent, which doesn't compel recognition dramatically, but is very perceptible to someone who is attentive — something like a sort of regret, like a lack of assent. It may go as far as a kind of refusal to collaborate. But I must stress it, without violence, without brutal self-assertion: it makes no noise, does not hurt, it is at the most a slight uneasiness. And if you disregard it, if you pay no attention, attach no importance to it, after a little while it will completely disappear and there will be nothing any longer.

It is not that it increases with the growing error, on the contrary, it disappears and the consciousness becomes veiled.

Therefore, one cannot give this as a sure sign, for if you have disobeyed this little indication several times, well, it will no longer come. But I tell you that if in all sincerity you are very attentive to it, then it will be a very sure and precious guide.

But if there is an uneasiness, it comes at the beginning, almost immediately, and when it doesn't show itself, well, no matter what one has started, it is preferable to do it to the very end so that the experience may be complete, unless one receives, as I said, an absolutely precise and categorical indication that it should not be done.

6 February 1957

> *"Death is the question Nature puts continually to Life and her reminder to it that it has not yet found itself. If there were no siege of death, the creature would be bound forever in the form of an imperfect living. Pursued by death he awakes to the idea of perfect life and seeks out its means and its possibility."*
>
> *Thoughts and Glimpses, SABCL, Vol. 16, p. 386*

There seems to be matter enough here for us not to need to go any further. This is a question which every person whose consciousness is awakened a little has asked himself at least once in his life. There is in the depths of the being such a need to perpetuate, to prolong, to develop life, that the moment one has a first contact with death, which, although it may be quite an accidental contact, is yet inevitable, there is a sort of recoil in the being.

In persons who are sensitive, it produces horror; in others, indignation. There is a tendency to ask oneself: "What is this monstrous farce in which one takes part without wanting to, without understanding it? Why are we born, if it is only to die? Why all this effort for development, progress, the flowering of the faculties, if it is to come to a diminution ending in decline and disintegration?..." Some feel a revolt in them, others less strong feel despair and always this question arises: "If there is a conscious Will behind all that, this Will seems to be monstrous."

But here Sri Aurobindo tells us that this was an indispensable means of awakening in the consciousness of matter the need for perfection, the necessity of progress, that without this catastrophe, all beings would have been satisfied with the condition they were in — perhaps.... This is not certain.

But then, we have to take things as they are and tell ourselves that we must find the way out of it all.

The fact is that everything is in a state of perpetual progressive development, that is, the whole creation, the whole universe is advancing towards a perfection which seems to recede as one goes forward towards it, for what seemed a perfection at a certain moment is no longer perfect after a time. The most subtle states of being in the consciousness follow this progression even as it is going on, and the higher up the scale one goes, the more closely does the rhythm of the advance resemble the rhythm of the universal development, and approach the rhythm of the divine development; but the material world is rigid by nature, transformation is slow, very slow, there, almost imperceptible for the measurement of time as human consciousness perceives it... and so there is a constant disequilibrium between the inner and outer movement, and this lack of balance, this incapacity of the outer forms to follow the movement of the inner progress brings about the necessity of decomposition and the change of forms. But if, into this matter, one could infuse enough consciousness to obtain the same rhythm, if matter could become plastic enough to follow the inner progression, this rupture of balance would not occur, and death would no longer be necessary.

So, according to what Sri Aurobindo tells us, Nature has found this rather radical means to awaken in the material consciousness the necessary aspiration and plasticity.

It is obvious that the most dominant characteristic of matter is inertia, and that, if there were not this violence, perhaps the individual consciousness would be so inert that rather than change it would accept to live in a perpetual imperfection.... That is possible. Anyway, this is how things are made, and for us who know a little more, there is only one thing that remains to be done, it is to change all this, as far as we have the means, by calling the Force, the Consciousness, the new Power which is capable of infusing into material substance the vibration which

can transform it, make it plastic, supple, progressive.

Obviously the greatest obstacle is the attachment to things as they are; but even Nature as a whole finds that those who have the deeper knowledge want to go too fast: she likes her meanderings, she likes her successive attempts, her failures, her fresh beginnings, her new inventions; she likes the fantasy of the path, the unexpectedness of the experience; one could almost say that for her the longer it takes, the more enjoyable it is.

But even of the best games one tires. There comes a time when one needs to change them and one could dream of a game in which it would no longer be necessary to destroy in order to progress, where the zeal for progress would be enough to find new means, new expressions, where the *élan* would be ardent enough to overcome inertia, lassitude, lack of understanding, fatigue, indifference.

Why does this body, as soon as some progress has been made, feel the need to sit down? It is tired. It says, "Oh! you must wait. I must be given time to rest." This is what leads it to death. If it felt within itself that ardour to do always better, become more transparent, more beautiful, more luminous, eternally young, one could escape from this macabre joke of Nature.

For her this is of no importance. She sees the whole, she sees the totality; she sees that nothing is lost, that it is only recombining quantities, numberless minute elements, without any importance, which are put back into a pot and mixed well — and something new comes out of it. But that game is not amusing for everybody. And if in one's consciousness one could be as vast as she, more powerful than she, why shouldn't one do the same thing in a better way?

This is the problem which confronts us now. With the addition, the new help of this Force which has descended, which is manifesting, working, why shouldn't one take in hand this tremendous game and make it more beautiful, more harmonious, more true?

It only needs brains powerful enough to receive this Force and formulate the possible course of action. There must be conscious beings powerful enough to convince Nature that there are other methods than hers.... This looks like madness, but all new things have always seemed like madness before they became realities.

The hour has come for this madness to be realised. And since we are all here for reasons that are perhaps unknown to most of you, but are still very conscious reasons, we may set ourselves to fulfil that madness — at least it will be worthwhile living it.

7 February 1957

As an exception, Mother gave this talk on a Thursday evening, before the collective meditation.

Before the meditation this evening I am going to say a few words to you, because several people have asked me the difference between a collective meditation and an individual meditation.

Individual meditation — I have already explained to you many times the different kinds of meditation that are possible and I won't begin to speak to you about that again.

But collective meditations have been practised in all ages for different reasons, in different ways and with different motives. What may be called a collective meditation is a group of people who gather together for a definite purpose; for example, in all ages it has been a practice to gather for prayers. Naturally in the Churches, it is a sort of collective meditation but even outside the Churches, some people have organised collective meditations for group prayer. These prayers are of two different kinds.

From the beginning of human history, it is known that certain groups of people would meet to express a certain common state of soul: some to sing together the praise of God, hymns, thanksgiving, to express adoration, thankfulness, gratitude, and to praise God; others — and there are historical examples of this — a certain number of people gathered together for a common invocation, for instance, to ask God for something, and this was done all together, united, in the hope that this invocation, this prayer, this asking would carry more weight. There have been some very famous instances. A very old one occurred in 1000 A.D. when some prophets had announced that it was the end of the world and everywhere people gathered together to offer common prayers and ask that the world may not come to an end (!) or anyway, for it to be protected. Much more

recently, in modern times, when King George of England was dying of pneumonia, people assembled in England, not only in the churches but even in the streets in front of the royal palace, to offer prayers and ask God to cure him. It so happened that he recovered, and they believed that it was their prayers.... That is, of course, the most external form, I could say the most worldly, of group meditation.

In all initiatory groups, in all the spiritual schools of ancient times, group meditation was always practised and in that case the motive was quite different. They assembled for a collective progress, to open together to a force, a light, an influence, and... this is more or less what we want to try to do.

However, there are two methods, and this is what I am going to explain to you. In both cases, one must practise as one does in individual meditation, that is, sit in a position at once comfortable enough for one to be able to keep it and yet not too comfortable for one to fall asleep in it! And then you do what I had asked you to do while I used to go for the distribution over there,[1] that is, prepare for the meditation, try to become calm and silent; not only to avoid chattering outwardly, but to try to silence your mind and gather your consciousness which is dispersed in all the thoughts you have and your preoccupations; to gather it, bring it back within yourself as completely as possible and concentrate it here, in the region of the heart, near the solar plexus, so that all the active energies in the head and all that keeps the brain running, may be brought back and concentrated here. This can be done in a few seconds, it can take a few minutes: that depends on each one. Well, this is a preparatory attitude. And then, once this is done — or done as well as you can do it — you may take two attitudes, that is, an active attitude or a passive attitude.

[1] Every evening, before meditation or the talks, Mother used to distribute groundnuts to the children of the "Green Group", in the adjoining playground.

What I call an active attitude is to concentrate on — I shall put it in general terms — on the person who is directing the meditation, with the will to open and receive from him what he intends to give you or the force with which he wants to put you into contact. That is active, for here there is a will at work and an active concentration to open yourself to someone, a concentration on someone.

The other one, the passive one is simply this: to be concentrated as I have told you, then you open yourself as one opens a door; you see, you have a door here (*gesture at the level of the heart*) and once you are concentrated, you open the door and stay like this (*gesture of immobility*). Or else, you may take another image, as if it were a book, and you open your book very wide with its pages completely blank, that is, quite silent, and you stay like that waiting for what is going to happen.

These are the two attitudes. You may take one or the other, according to the day, the occasion, or you may adopt one of them, out of preference, if it helps you more. Both are effective and can have equally good results.

And so, now, for our special case, I shall tell you what I am trying to do.... It will soon be a year since, one Wednesday, we had the manifestation of the supramental force. Since then, it has been working very actively, even while very few people are aware of it! but still I thought the time had come for — how to put it? — for us to help it a little in its work by making an effort of receptivity.

Of course, it does not work only in the Ashram, it is working in the whole world and in all places where there is some receptivity this Force is at work, and I must say the Ashram hasn't an exclusive receptivity in the world, the monopoly of receptivity. But since it so happens that all of us here more or less know what has taken place, well, I hope that individually each person is doing his best to benefit by the occasion; but collectively we can do something, that is, try to unify a ground,

to produce a particularly fertile soil to obtain collectively the maximum receptivity and to have as little wastage as possible of time and energies.

So now, you have been told in a general way what we want to try to do and you have only to... to do it.

13 February 1957

> *"Pain and grief are Nature's reminder to the soul that the pleasure it enjoys is only a feeble hint of the real delight of existence. In each pain and torture of our being is the secret of a flame of rapture compared with which our greatest pleasures are only as dim flickerings. It is this secret which forms the attraction for the soul of the great ordeals, sufferings and fierce experiences of life which the nervous mind in us shuns and abhors."*
>
> *Thoughts and Glimpses, SABCL, Vol. 16, p. 386*

Quite naturally we ask ourselves what this secret is, towards which pain leads us. For a superficial and imperfect understanding, one could believe that it is pain which the soul is seeking. Nothing of the kind. The very nature of the soul is divine Delight, constant, unvarying, unconditioned, ecstatic; but it is true that if one can face suffering with courage, endurance, an unshakable faith in the divine Grace, if one can, instead of shunning suffering when it comes, enter into it with this will, this aspiration to go through it and find the luminous truth, the unvarying delight which is at the core of all things, the door of pain is often more direct, more immediate than that of satisfaction or contentment.

I am not speaking of pleasure because pleasure turns its back constantly and almost completely on this profound divine Delight.

Pleasure is a deceptive and perverse disguise which turns us away from our goal and we certainly should not seek it if we are eager to find the truth. Pleasure vaporises us; it deceives us, leads us astray. Pain brings us back to a deeper truth by obliging us to concentrate in order to be able to bear it, be able to face this thing that crushes us. It is in pain that one most easily finds the true strength again, when one is strong. It is in pain that

one most easily finds the true faith again, the faith in something which is above and beyond all pain.

When one enjoys oneself and forgets, when one takes things as they come, tries to avoid being serious and looking life in the face, in a word when one seeks to forget, to forget that there is a problem to solve, that there is something to find, that we have a reason for existence and living, that we are not here just to pass our time and go away without having learnt or done anything, then one really wastes one's time, one misses the opportunity that has been given to us, this — I cannot say unique, but marvellous opportunity for an existence which is the field of progress, which is the moment in eternity when you can discover the secret of life; for this physical, material existence is a wonderful opportunity, a possibility given to you to find the purpose of life, to make you advance one step towards this deeper truth, to make you discover this secret which puts you into contact with the eternal rapture of the divine life.

(*Silence*)

I have already told you many a time that to seek suffering and pain is a morbid attitude which must be avoided, but to run away from them through forgetfulness, through a superficial, frivolous movement, through diversion, is cowardice. When pain comes, it comes to teach us something. The quicker we learn it, the more the need for pain diminishes, and when we know the secret, it will no longer be possible to suffer, for that secret reveals to us the reason, the cause, the origin of suffering, and the way to pass beyond it.

The secret is to emerge from the ego, get out of its prison, unite ourselves with the Divine, merge into Him, not to allow anything to separate us from Him. Then, once one has discovered this secret and realises it in one's being, pain loses its justification and suffering disappears. It is an all-powerful remedy, not only in the deeper parts of the being, in the soul, in

the spiritual consciousness, but also in life and in the body.

There is no illness, no disorder which can resist the discovery of this secret and the putting of it into practice, not only in the higher parts of the being but in the cells of the body.

If one knows how to teach the cells the splendour that lies within them, if one knows how to make them understand the reality which makes them exist, gives them being, then they too enter the total harmony, and the physical disorder which causes the illness vanishes as do all other disorders of the being.

But for that one must be neither cowardly nor fearful. When the physical disorder comes, one must not be afraid; one must not run away from it, must face it with courage, calmness, confidence, with the certitude that illness is a *falsehood* and that if one turns entirely, in full confidence, with a complete quietude to the divine Grace, It will settle in these cells as It is established in the depths of the being, and the cells themselves will share in the eternal Truth and Delight.

20 February 1957

> *"The limitations of the body are a mould; soul and mind have to pour themselves into them, break them and constantly remould them in wider limits till the formula of agreement is found between this finite and their own infinity."*
>
> *Thoughts and Glimpses, SABCL, Vol. 16, p. 386*

Sweet Mother, how should we understand: "the limitations of the body are a mould"?

If you did not have a body with a precise form, if you were not a formed individuality, fully conscious and having its own qualities, you would all be fused into one another and be indistinguishable. Even if we go only a little inwards, into the most material vital being, there is such a mixture between the vibrations of different people that it is very difficult to distinguish any of you. And if you did not have a body, it would be a sort of inextricable pulp. Therefore, it is the form, this precise and apparently rigid form of the body, which distinguishes you one from another. So this form serves as a mould. (*Speaking to the child*) Do you know what a mould is? — Yes! One pours something inside, in a liquid or semi-liquid form, and when it cools down one can break the mould and have the object in a precise form. Well, the form of the body serves as a mould in which the vital and mental forces can take a precise form, so that you can become an individual being separate from others.

It is only gradually, very slowly, through the movements of life and a more or less careful and thorough education that you begin to have sensations which are personal to you, feelings and ideas which are personal to you. An individualised mind is something extremely rare, which comes only after a long education;

otherwise it is a kind of thought-current passing through your brain and then through another's and then through a multitude of other brains, and all this is in perpetual movement and has no individuality. One thinks what others are thinking, others think what still others are thinking, and everybody thinks like that in a great mixture, because these are currents, vibrations of thought passing from one to another. If you look at yourself attentively, you will very quickly become aware that very few thoughts in you are personal. Where do you draw them from? — From what you have heard, from what you have read, what you have been taught, and how many of these thoughts you have are the result of your own experience, your own reflection, your purely personal observation? — Not many.

Only those who have an intense intellectual life, who are in the habit of reflecting, observing, putting ideas together, gradually form a mental individuality for themselves.

Most people — and not only those who are uneducated but even the well-read — can have the most contradictory, the most opposite ideas in their heads without even being aware of the contradictions. I have seen numerous examples like that, of people who cherished ideas and even had political, social, religious opinions on all the so-called higher fields of human intelligence, who had absolutely contradictory opinions on the same subject, and were not aware of it. And if you observe yourself, you will see that you have many ideas which ought to be linked by a sequence of intermediate ideas which are the result of a considerable widening of the thought if they are not to coexist in an absurd way.

Therefore, before an individuality becomes truly individual and has its own qualities, it must be contained in a vessel, otherwise it would spread out like water and would no longer have any form at all. Some people, at a rather lower level, know themselves only by the name they bear. They would not be able to distinguish themselves from their neighbours except by their name. They are asked, "Who are you?" — "My name is this."

A little later they tell you the name of their occupation or about their main characteristic. If they are asked, "Who are you?" — "I am a painter."

But at a certain level the only answer is the name. And what is a name? It is nothing but a word, isn't that so? And what is there behind? Nothing. It is a whole collection of vague things which do not at all represent a person as different from his neighbour. He is differentiated only because he has another name. If everybody bore the same name, it would be very difficult to distinguish one person from another!

I read to you the other day from that book on aviation[1] the story of the slave who, whenever he was asked a question, always answered by his name. But that was already a progress compared with all those who were given the name of slave — for all of them it was the same one — and they all accepted to have the same name, and therefore to be the same person. For they had no individuality at all, they only had an occupation; and that occupation being the same for a successive number of slaves, they all had the same name.

One lives by a kind of habit which is barely half-conscious — one lives, does not even objectify what one does, why one does it, how one does it. One does it by habit. All those who are born in a certain environment, a certain country, automatically take the habits of that environment, not only material habits but habits of thought, habits of feeling and habits of acting. They do it without watching themselves doing it, quite naturally, and if someone points this out to them they are astonished.

As a matter of fact, one has the habit of sleeping, speaking, eating, moving and one does all this as something quite natural, without wondering why or how.... And many other things. All the time one does things automatically, by force of habit, one does not watch oneself. And so, when one lives in a particular society, one automatically does what is normally done in that

[1] Saint-Exupéry, *Terre des hommes*.

society. And if somebody begins to watch himself acting, watch himself feeling and thinking, he looks like a kind of phenomenal monster compared with the environment he lives in.

Therefore, individuality is not at all the rule, it is an exception, and if you do not have that sort of bag, a particular form which is your outer body and your appearance, you could hardly be distinguished from one another.

Individuality is a conquest. And, as Sri Aurobindo says here, this first conquest is only a first stage, and once you have realised within you something like a personal independent and conscious being, then what you have to do is to break the form and go farther. For example, if you want to progress mentally, you must break all your mental forms, all your mental constructions to be able to make new ones. So, to begin with, a tremendous labour is required to individualise oneself, and afterwards one must demolish all that has been done in order to progress. But as you do not watch yourself doing things and as it is the custom — not everywhere, of course; let us say here — the custom to work, to read, to develop yourself, to try to do something, to form yourself a little, you do it quite naturally and without even watching yourself, as I said.

And only when these external forms come into a mutual friction you begin to feel that you are different from others. Otherwise you are this person or that, according to the name you bear. It is only when there is a friction, when something does not go smoothly, that you become aware of a difference, then you see that you are different, otherwise you are not aware of it and you are not different. In fact, you are very, very little different from one another.

How many things in your life are done at least essentially in the same way as others. For instance, sleeping, moving and eating, and all sorts of things like that. Never have you asked yourselves why you do a thing in one way and not another. You wouldn't be able to say. If I asked you, "Why do you act in this way and not that?" you wouldn't know what to say. But it is

quite simply because you were born in certain conditions and it is the habit to be like that in these conditions. Otherwise, if you had been born in another age and other conditions, you would act altogether differently without even realising the difference, it would appear absolutely natural to you.... For instance — a very, very small instance — in most Western countries and even in some Eastern ones, people sew like this, from right to left; in Japan they sew from left to right. Well, it seems quite natural to you to sew from right to left, doesn't it? That is how you have been taught and you don't think about it, you sew in that way. If you go to Japan and they see you sewing, it makes them laugh, for they are in the habit of sewing differently. It is the same thing with writing. You write like this, from left to right, but there are people who write from top to bottom, and others who write from right to left, and they do it most naturally. I am not speaking of those who have studied, reflected, compared ways of writing, I am not speaking of more or less learned people, no, I am speaking of quite ordinary people, and above all of children who do what is done around them, quite spontaneously and without questioning. But then, when by chance or circumstance they are faced with a different way, it is a tremendous revelation for them that things can be done in a different way from theirs.

And these are quite simple things, I mean the ones which strike you, but this is true down to the smallest detail. You do things in this way because in the place and environment in which you live they are done in this way. And you do not watch yourself doing them.

Indeed, the source was One, you see, and creation had to be manifold. And it must have represented quite a considerable labour to make this multiplicity conscious of being multiple.

And if one observes very attentively, if creation had kept the memory of its origin, it would perhaps never have become a diverse multiplicity. There would have been at the centre of each being the sense of perfect unity, and the diversity would — perhaps — never have been expressed.

Through the loss of the memory of this unity began the possibility of becoming conscious of differences; and when one goes into the inconscient, at the other end, one falls back into a sort of unity that's unconscious of itself, in which the diversity is as unexpressed as it is in the origin.

At both ends there is the same absence of diversity. In one case it is through a supreme consciousness of unity, in the other through a perfect unconsciousness of unity.

The fixity of form is the means by which individuality can be formed.

That's all, then.

6 March 1957

My eye won't allow me to read today.[1] But I have been asked a question on what I read to you last week. I am going to reply to it this evening. Pavitra, will you read, please?

> (Pavitra reads) *What does this paragraph mean?: "Freedom is the law of being in its illimitable unity, secret master of all Nature: servitude is the law of love in the being voluntarily giving itself to serve the play of its other selves in the multiplicity."*
>
> *Thoughts and Glimpses, SABCL, Vol. 16, p. 386*

At a superficial glance these two things appear absolutely contradictory and incompatible. Outwardly one cannot conceive how one can be at once in freedom and in servitude, but there is an attitude which reconciles the two and makes them one of the happiest states of material existence.

Freedom is a sort of instinctive need, a necessity for the integral development of the being. In its essence it is a perfect realisation of the highest consciousness, it is the expression of Unity and of union with the Divine, it is the very sense of the Origin and the fulfilment. But because this Unity has manifested in the many — in the multiplicity — something had to serve as a link between the Origin and the manifestation, and the most perfect link one can conceive of is love. And what is the first gesture of love? To give oneself, to serve. What is its spontaneous, immediate, inevitable movement? To serve. To serve in a joyous, complete, total self-giving.

[1] On the 27th February there was only a reading followed by a meditation, no talk was given. Since the Darshan of November 24, Mother had been having a slight haemorrhage in her left eye.

So, in their purity, in their truth, these two things — freedom and service — far from being contradictory, are complementary. It is in perfect union with the supreme Reality that perfect freedom is found, for all ignorance, all unconsciousness is a bondage which makes you inefficient, limited, powerless. The least ignorance in oneself is a limitation, one is no longer free. As long as there is an element of unconsciousness in the being, it is a limitation, a bondage. Only in perfect union with the supreme Reality can perfect freedom exist. And how to realise this union if not through a spontaneous self-giving: the gift of love. And as I said, the first gesture, the first expression of love is service.

So the two are closely united in the Truth. But here on earth, in this world of ignorance and inconscience, this service which should have been spontaneous, full of love, the very expression of love, has become something imposed, an inevitable necessity, performed only for the maintenance of life, for the continuation of existence, and thus it has become something ugly, miserable — humiliating. What should have been a flowering, a joy, has become an ugliness, a weariness, a sordid obligation. And this sense, this need for freedom has also been deformed and has become that kind of thirst for independence which leads straight to revolt, to separation, isolation, the very opposite of true freedom.

Independence!... I remember having heard an old occultist and sage give a beautiful reply to someone who said, "I want to be independent! I am an independent being! I exist only when I am independent!" And the other answered him with a smile, "Then that means that nobody will love you, because if someone loves you, you immediately become dependent on this love."

It is a beautiful reply, for it is indeed love which leads to Unity and it is Unity which is the true expression of freedom. And so those who in the name of their right to freedom claim independence, turn their backs completely on this true freedom, for they deny love.

The deformation comes from constraint.

One cannot love through compulsion, you cannot be compelled to love, it is no longer love. Therefore, as soon as compulsion intervenes, it becomes a falsehood. All the movements of the inner being must be spontaneous movements, with that spontaneity which comes from an inner harmony, an understanding — from a voluntary self-giving — from a return to the deeper truth, the reality of being, the Origin and the Goal.

8 March 1957

The following story was told by Mother during one of the Friday classes, generally reserved for readings to the children.

A Buddhist Story

As I am still unable to read to you this evening, I am going to tell you a story. It is a Buddhist story which perhaps you know, it is modern but has the merit of being authentic. I heard it from Madame Z who, as you probably know, is a well-known Buddhist, especially as she was the first European woman to enter Lhasa. Her journey to Tibet was very perilous and thrilling and she narrated one of the incidents of this journey to me, which I am going to tell you this evening.

She was with a certain number of fellow travellers forming a sort of caravan, and as the approach to Tibet was relatively easier through Indo-China, they were going from that side. Indo-China is covered with large forests, and these forests are infested with tigers, some of which become man-eaters... and when that happens they are called: "Mr. Tiger."

Late one evening, when they were in the thick of the forest — a forest they had to cross in order to be able to camp safely — Madame Z realised that it was her meditation hour. Now, she used to meditate at fixed times, very regularly, without ever missing one and as it was time for her meditation she told her companions, "Continue the journey, I shall sit here and do my meditation, and when I have finished I shall join you; meanwhile, go on to the next stage and prepare the camp." One of the coolies told her, "Oh! no, Madam, this is impossible, quite impossible" — he spoke in his own language, naturally, but I must tell you Madame Z knew Tibetan like a Tibetan — "it is quite impossible, Mr. Tiger is in the forest and now is just the

time for him to come and look for his dinner. We can't leave you and you can't stop here!" She answered that it did not bother her at all, that the meditation was much more important than safety, that they could all withdraw and that she would stay there alone.

Very reluctantly they started off, for it was impossible to reason with her — when she had decided to do something nothing could prevent her from doing it. They went away and she sat down comfortably at the foot of a tree and entered into meditation. After a while she felt a rather unpleasant presence. She opened her eyes to see what it was... and three or four steps away, right in front of her was Mr. Tiger! — with eyes full of greed. So, like a good Buddhist, she said, "Well, if this is the way by which I shall attain Nirvana, very good. I have only to prepare to leave my body in a suitable way, in the proper spirit." And without moving, without even the least quiver, she closed her eyes again and entered once more into meditation; a somewhat deeper, more intense meditation, detaching herself completely from the illusion of the world, ready to pass into Nirvana.... Five minutes went by, ten minutes, half an hour — nothing happened. Then as it was time for the meditation to be over, she opened her eyes... and there was no tiger! Undoubtedly, seeing such a motionless body it must have thought it was not fit for eating! For tigers, like all wild animals, except the hyena, do not attack and eat a dead body. Impressed probably by this immobility — I dare not say by the intensity of the meditation! — it had withdrawn and she found herself quite alone and out of danger. She calmly went her way and on reaching camp said, "Here I am."

That's my story. Now we are going to meditate like her, not to prepare ourselves for Nirvana (*laughter*), but to heighten our consciousness!

13 March 1957

This evening, once again, no reading. But someone has asked me a question on something I have written — Pavitra, do you have it? Read it.

> (Pavitra reads) *"Our best friend is he who loves us in the best of ourselves, and yet does not ask us to be other than we are."*
>
> *Words of the Mother, CWM, Vol. 14, p. 288*

I am asked to explain what this means. I have a good mind to tell you all sorts of paradoxical things! But still...

Anyway, I wrote this with something in mind which one usually forgets: one asks one's friends and those around one to be not what they are but what one would like them to be — one can form an ideal for oneself and want to apply it to everybody, but... This reminds me of Tolstoy's son whom I met in Japan and who was going round the world in the hope of bringing about unity among men. His intentions were excellent, but his way of doing it seemed less happy! He said with an imperturbable seriousness that if everybody spoke the same language, if everybody dressed in the same way, ate in the same way and behaved in the same way, that would inevitably bring about unity! And when asked how he planned to realise this he said it would be enough to go from land to land preaching a new but universal language, a new but universal dress, and new but universal habits. That was all.... And that was what he intended to do!

(*Laughing*) Well, everyone in his own little field is like that. He has an ideal, a conception of what is true and beautiful and noble, and even divine, and this conception of his he wants to impose on others. There are also many people who have a conception of the Divine and who try with all their might to

impose their conception on the Divine... and usually don't lose heart until they have lost their life!

It is this *spontaneous* and almost unconscious attitude I had in mind, for if I were to tell one of you, "There! that's what you want to do", he would protest very vehemently and say, "What! Never in my life!" But when one has opinions about people and especially reactions to their way of life, it is because one blames them for not being what one thinks they ought to be. If we never forget that there cannot be, should not be two things exactly alike in the universe, for the second would be useless since there would already be one of the same kind, and that the universe is constituted for the harmony of an infinite multiplicity in which two movements — and even more, two consciousnesses — are never alike, then what right have we to intervene and want that somebody should conform to our own thought?... For if you think in a particular way, it is certain that the other won't be able to think in the same way. And if you are a person of a certain type, it is absolutely certain that the other cannot be of the same type. And what you ought to learn is to harmonise, synthesise, combine all the disparate things in the universe by putting each one *in its place*. Total harmony does not at all lie in an identity, but in a harmonisation which can come only by putting each thing in its place.

And this must be at the basis of the reaction that one has the right to expect from a true friend, who should wish not that his friend should be like him, but that he may be what he is.

Now, at the beginning of the sentence I said, "He loves you in the best part of yourself...." To put it a little more positively: Your friend is not one who encourages you to come down to your lowest level, encourages you to do foolish things along with him or fall into bad ways with him or one who commends you for all the nasty things you do, that's quite clear. And yet, usually, very, very often, much too often, one makes friends with somebody with whom one doesn't feel uneasy when one has sunk lower. One considers as one's best friend somebody

who encourages one in one's follies: one mixes with others to roam about instead of going to school, to go and steal fruit from gardens, to make fun of one's teachers and for all kinds of things like that. I am not making any personal remarks, but indeed I could quote some examples, unhappily far too many. And perhaps this is why I said, "They are not your true friends." But still, they are the most convenient friends, for they don't make you feel that you are in the wrong; while to one who comes and tells you, "Now then, instead of roaming about and doing nothing or doing stupid things, if you came to the class, don't you think it would be better!" usually one replies, "Don't bother me! You are not my friend." This is perhaps why I wrote this sentence. There you are. I repeat, I am not making any personal remarks, but still it is an opportunity to tell you something that unfortunately happens much too often.

There are children here who were full of promise, who were at the top of their class, who used to work seriously, from whom I expected much, and who have been completely ruined by this kind of friendship. Since we are speaking of this, I shall tell them today that I regret this very much and that I do not call such people friends but mortal enemies against whom one should protect oneself as one would against a contagious disease.

We don't like the company of someone who has a contagious disease, and avoid him carefully; generally he is segregated so that it does not spread. But the contagion of vice and bad behaviour, the contagion of depravity, falsehood and what is base, is infinitely more dangerous than the contagion of any disease, and this is what must be very carefully avoided. You must consider as your best friend the one who tells you that he does not wish to participate in any bad or ugly act, the one who gives you courage to resist low temptations; he is a friend. He is the one you must associate with and not someone with whom you have fun and who strengthens your evil propensities. That's all.

Now, we won't labour the point and I hope that those I have in mind will understand what I have said.

Indeed, you should choose as friends only those who are wiser than yourself, those whose company ennobles you and helps you to master yourself, to progress, to act in a better way and see more clearly. And finally, the best friend one can have — isn't he the Divine, to whom one can say everything, reveal everything? For there indeed is the source of all compassion, of all power to efface every error when it is not repeated,[1] to open the road to true realisation; it is he who can understand all, heal all, and always help on the path, help you not to fail, not to falter, not to fall, but to walk straight to the goal. He is the true friend, the friend of good and bad days, the one who can understand, can heal, and who is always there when you need him. When you call him sincerely, he is always there to guide and uphold you — and to love you in the true way.

[1] In 1961 when this talk was first published, Mother commented on this phrase: "So long as one repeats one's mistakes, nothing can be abolished, for one recreates them every minute. When someone makes a mistake, serious or not, this mistake has consequences in his life, a 'Karma' which must be exhausted, but the Divine Grace, if one turns to It, has the power of cutting off the consequences; but for this the fault must not be repeated. One shouldn't think one can continue to commit the same stupidities indefinitely and that indefinitely the Grace will cancel all the consequences, it does not happen like that! The past may be completely purified, cleansed, to the point of having no effect on the future, but on condition that one doesn't change it again into a perpetual present; you yourself must stop the bad vibration in yourself, you must not go on reproducing the same vibration indefinitely."

15 March 1957

The following talk was given on a Friday, the day Mother used to read to the children.

Reminiscences of Tlemcen

Once again, this evening, I am not going to read, but I won't tell you a story; I am going to tell you about Madame X.

Madame X was born on the Isle of Wight and she lived in Tlemcen with her husband who was a great occultist. Madame X herself was an occultist of great powers, a remarkable clairvoyant, and she had mediumistic qualities. Her powers were quite exceptional; she had received an extremely complete and rigorous training and she could exteriorise herself, that is, bring out of her material body a subtle body, in full consciousness, and do it twelve times in succession. That is, she could pass consciously from one state of being to another, live there as consciously as in her physical body, and then again put that subtler body into trance, exteriorise herself from it, and so on twelve times successively, to the extreme limit of the world of forms.... I shall speak to you about that later, when you can understand better what I am talking about. But I am going to tell you about some small incidents I saw when I was in Tlemcen[1] myself, and a story she told me I shall also tell you.

The incidents are of a more external kind, but very funny.

She was almost always in trance and she had trained her body so well that even when she was in trance, that is, when one or more parts of her being were exteriorised, the body had a life of its own and she could walk about and even attend to some small material occupations.... She did a great deal of work, for

[1] In 1907.

in her trances she could talk freely and she used to narrate what she saw, which was noted down and later formed a teaching — which has even been published. And because of all that and the occult work she was doing, she was often tired, in the sense that her body was tired and needed to recuperate its vitality in a very concrete way.

Now, one day when she was particularly tired, she told me, "You will see how I am going to recover my strength." She had plucked from her garden — it was not a garden, it was a vast estate with ancient olive trees, and fig trees such as I have never seen anywhere else, it was a real marvel, on a mountain-side, from the plain to almost half way up — and in this garden there were many lemon trees and orange trees... and grapefruit. Grapefruit has flowers which have an even better fragrance than orange blossoms — they are large flowers and she knew how to make an essence from them herself, she had given me a bottle — well, she had plucked a huge grapefruit like this, (*gesture*) very large and ripe, and she lay down on her bed and put the grapefruit on her solar plexus, here, (*gesture*) like this, holding it with both hands. She lay down and rested. She did not sleep, she rested. She told me, "Come back in an hour." An hour later I returned... and the grapefruit was as flat as a pancake. That meant that she had such a power to absorb vitality that she had absorbed all the life from the fruit and it had become soft and completely flat. And I saw that myself! You may try, you won't succeed! (*Laughter*)

Another time — and this is even more amusing... But first I shall tell you a little about Tlemcen, which you probably don't know. Tlemcen is a small town in southern Algeria, almost on the borders of the Sahara. The town itself is built in the valley which is surrounded by a circle of mountains, not very high but nevertheless higher than hills. And the valley is very fertile, verdurous, magnificent. The population there is mainly Arabs and rich merchants; indeed, the city is very prosperous — it *was*, for I don't know what it is like now; I am speaking to you about

things that happened at the beginning of this century — there were very prosperous merchants there and from time to time these Arabs came to pay a visit to Monsieur X. They knew nothing, understood nothing, but they were very interested.

One day, towards evening, one of these people arrived and started asking questions, ludicrous ones besides. Then Madame X said to me, "You will see, we are going to have a little fun." In the verandah of the house there was a big dining-table, a very large table, like that, quite wide, with eight legs, four on each side. It was really massive, and heavy. Chairs had been arranged to receive this man, at a little distance from the table. He was at one end, Madame X at the other; I was seated on one side, Monsieur X also. All four of us were there. Nobody was near the table, all of us were at a distance from it. And so, he was asking questions, as I said rather ludicrous ones, on the powers one could have and what could be done with what he called "magic".... She looked at me and said nothing but sat very still. Suddenly I heard a cry, a cry of terror. The table started moving and with an almost heroic gesture went to attack the poor man seated at the other end! It went and bumped against him.... Madame X had not touched it, nobody had touched it. She had only concentrated on the table and by her vital power had made it move. At first the table had wobbled a little, then had started moving slowly, then suddenly, as in one bound, it flung itself on that man, who went away and never came back!

She also had the power to dematerialise and rematerialise things. And she never said anything, she did not boast, she did not say, "I am going to do something", she did not speak of anything; she just did it quietly. She did not attach much importance to these things, she knew they were just a proof that there are other forces than purely material ones.

When I used to go out in the evenings — towards the end of the afternoon I used to go for a walk with Monsieur X to see the countryside, go walking in the mountains, the neighbouring villages — I used to lock my door; it was a habit with me, I

always locked my door. Madame X would rarely go out, for the reasons I have already mentioned, because she was in a trance most of the time and liked to stay at home. But when I returned from the walk and opened my door — which was locked, and therefore nobody could have entered — I would always find a kind of little garland of flowers on my pillow. They were flowers which grew in the garden, they are called *Belles de Nuit;*[2] we have them here, they open in the evening and have a wonderful fragrance. There was a whole alley of them, with big bushes as high as this; they are remarkable flowers — I believe it's the same here — on the same bush there are different coloured flowers: yellow, red, mixed, violet. They are tiny flowers like... bluebells; no, rather like the convolvulus, but these grow on bushes — convolvulus is a creeper, these are bushes — we have some here in the garden. She always used to put some behind her ears, for they have a lovely smell, oh! delightfully beautiful. And so, she used to take a walk in the alley between these big bushes which were quite high, and she gathered flowers, and — when I came back, these flowers were in my room!... She never told me how she did it, but she certainly did not go in there. Once she said to me, "Were there no flowers in your room?" — "Ah! yes, indeed," I said. And that was all. Then I knew it was she who had put them there.

I could tell you many stories, but I shall finish with this one she had told me, which I did not see myself.

As I was telling you, Tlemcen is very near the Sahara and it has a desert climate except that in the valley a river flows which never dries up and makes the whole country very fertile. But the mountains were absolutely arid. Only in the part occupied by farmers did something grow. Now, Monsieur X's park — a large estate — was, as I said, a marvellous place... everything grew there, everything one could imagine and to a magnificent size. Now, she told me — they had been there a very long time — that

[2] *Mirabilis*, Marvel of Peru; significance given by Mother: *Réconfort*, Solace.

about five or six years before, I think, they had felt that these barren mountains might one day cause the river to dry up and that it would be better to plant trees there; and the administrator of Tlemcen ordered trees to be planted on all the neighbouring hills; a wide amphitheatre, you know. He said that pine trees should be planted, for in Algeria the sea-pine grows very well. And they wanted to try it. Well, for some reason or other — forgetfulness or fantasy, heaven knows! — instead of ordering pine trees they ordered fir trees! Fir trees belong to Scandinavian countries, not at all to desert lands. And very conscientiously all these fir trees were planted. Now Madame X saw this and I believe she felt like making an experiment. So it happened that four or five years later these fir trees had not only grown but had become magnificent and when I went to Tlemcen the mountains all around were absolutely green, magnificent with trees. She said to me, "You see, these are not pine trees, they are fir trees", and indeed they were — you know fir trees are Christmas trees, don't you? — they were fir trees. Then she told me how after three years when the fir trees had grown, suddenly one day or rather one December night, as she had just gone to bed and put out her light, she was awakened by a tiny little noise — she was very sensitive to noise; she opened her eyes and saw something like a moonbeam — there was no moon that night — lighting up a corner of her room. And she noticed that a little gnome was there, like the ones you see in the fairy-tales of Norway and Sweden, Scandinavian fairy-tales. He was a tiny little fellow with a big head, a pointed cap, pointed shoes of dark green, a long white beard, and all covered with snow.

So she looked at him — her eyes were open — she looked at him and said, "But... Eh! what are you doing here?" — she was a little worried, for in the warmth of her room the snow was melting and making a little pool on the floor of her room. "But what are you doing here!"

Then he smiled at her, gave her his sweetest smile and said, "But we were called by the fir trees! Fir trees call the snow. They

are trees of the snow countries. I am the Lord of the Snow, so I came to announce to you that... we are coming. We have been called, we are coming."

"Snow?... But we are near the Sahara!"

"Ah! then you shouldn't have planted fir trees."

Finally she told him, "Listen, I don't know if what you tell me is true, but you are spoiling my floor. Go away!"

So he went away. The moonlight went with him. She lit a lamp — for there was no electricity — she lit a lamp and saw... a little pool of water in the place where he had stood. So it was not a dream, there really was a little being whose snow had melted in her room. And the next morning when the sun rose, it rose upon mountains covered with snow. It was the first time, it had never been seen before in that country.

Since then, every winter — not for long, just for a little while — all the mountains are covered with snow.

So that's my story.

20 March 1957

"The delight of victory is sometimes less than the attraction of struggle and suffering; nevertheless the laurel and not the cross should be the aim of the conquering human soul.

"Souls that do not aspire are God's failures; but Nature is pleased and loves to multiply them because they assure her of stability and prolong her empire.

"Those who are poor, ignorant, ill-born or ill-bred are not the common herd; the common herd are all who are satisfied with pettiness and an average humanity.

"Help men, but do not pauperise them of their energy; lead and instruct men, but see that their initiative and originality remain intact; take others into thyself, but give them in return the full godhead of their nature. He who can do this is the leader and the guru.

"God has made the world a field of battle and filled it with the trampling of combatants and the cries of a great wrestle and struggle. Would you filch His peace without paying the price He has fixed for it?

"Distrust a perfect-seeming success, but when having succeeded thou findest still much to do, rejoice and go forward; for the labour is long before the real perfection.

"There is no more benumbing error than to mistake a stage for the goal or to linger too long in a resting place."

Thoughts and Glimpses, SABCL, Vol. 16, pp. 391–92

All that Sri Aurobindo says here is aimed at fighting against human nature with its inertia, its heaviness, laziness, easy satisfactions, hostility to all effort. How many times in life does one meet people who become pacifists because they are afraid

to fight, who long for rest before they have earned it, who are satisfied with a little progress and in their imagination and desires make it into a marvellous realisation so as to justify their stopping half-way.

In ordinary life, already, this happens so much. Indeed, this is the bourgeois ideal, which has deadened mankind and made man into what he is now: "Work while you are young, accumulate wealth, honour, position; be provident, have a little foresight, put something by, lay up a capital, become an official — so that later when you are forty you "can sit down", enjoy your income and later your pension and, as they say, enjoy a well-earned rest." — To sit down, to stop on the way, not to move forward, to go to sleep, to go downhill towards the grave before one's time, cease to live the purpose of life — to sit down!

The minute one stops going forward, one falls back. The moment one is satisfied and no longer aspires, one begins to die. Life is movement, it is effort, it is a march forward, the scaling of a mountain, the climb towards new revelations, towards future realisations. Nothing is more dangerous than wanting to rest. It is in action, in effort, in the march forward that repose must be found, the true repose of complete trust in the divine Grace, of the absence of desires, of victory over egoism.

True repose comes from the widening, the universalisation of the consciousness. Become as vast as the world and you will always be at rest. In the thick of action, in the very midst of the battle, the effort, you will know the repose of infinity and eternity.

22 March 1957

The following story was told by Mother during a Friday class.

This evening I am going to read to you a short story which seemed quite instructive to me. It is a tale of ancient times, of what used to happen before there were printing presses and books, of the days when only the Guru or the Initiate had the knowledge and gave it only to those he considered worthy of having it. And for him, usually, "to be worthy of having it" meant *putting into practice* what one had learnt. He gave you a truth and expected you to practise it. And when you had put it into practice, he consented to give you another.

Now things happen quite differently. Everybody and anybody can have a book, read it right through and he is quite free to practise it or not as he pleases. This is all very well, but it creates a certain confusion in many minds, and people who have read many books think that it is enough and that all sorts of miraculous things must happen to them because they have read books, and that they don't need to take the trouble of practising. So they become impatient and say, "How is it that although I have read all this I am still just the same person, have the same difficulties, haven't achieved any realisation?" I very often hear remarks of this kind.

They forget only one thing, that they have obtained the knowledge — intellectual, mental knowledge — before having deserved it, that is, before having put into practice what they have read, and that, naturally, there is discrepancy between their state of consciousness and the ideas, the knowledge they can speak about at length but which they haven't practised.

So it is for the impatient ones that I am going to read this story, to tell you how things happened in the days of old when one couldn't simply have a book and read it, when one depended

on the Guru or the Initiate to obtain the knowledge which he alone had; he had received it from another Guru, another Initiate, and he transmitted it to you when he pleased, that is, when he found you worthy of having it.

So here's my story (*Mother reads*):

A Story of Initiation
(*Translated from the Gujarati*)

Once upon a time there was a Mahatma who was a great ascetic and a great pandit. He was honoured by all, full of years and wisdom. His name was Junun. Many young boys, many young men used to come to him to receive initiation. They stayed in his hermitage, became pandits themselves, then returned home after a long and studious retreat.

One day a young man came to him. His name was Yusuf Hussein. The Mahatma agreed to let him stay with him without even asking who he was. Four years went by, thus, until one morning Junun sent for Yusuf and, for the first time, questioned him: "Why have you come here?" Without a second thought Yusuf answered: "To receive religious initiation." Junun said nothing. He called a servant and asked him, "Have you prepared the box as I asked you?"

"Yes, Master, it is there, quite ready."

"Bring it without further delay," said Junun.

With great care the servant placed the box before the Mahatma. He took it and gave it to Yusuf: "I have a friend who lives there on the banks of the river Neela. Go and take this box to him from me. But take good care, brother, don't make any mistake on the way. Keep this box carefully with you and give it to the man whom it is for. When you come back I shall give you initiation." Once again the Mahatma repeated his advice and described the route Yusuf had to follow to reach the river Neela. Yusuf bowed down at his Guru's feet, took the box and started on his way.

The retreat where the Mahatma's friend lived was quite far away and in those days there were no cars or railways. So Yusuf walked. He walked the whole morning, then came the afternoon. The heat was intense and radiated everywhere. He felt tired. So he sat down in the shade of an old tree by the roadside to rest a little. The box was very small. It was not locked. Besides, Yusuf had not even paid attention to it. His Guru had told him to carry a box, and he had started off without another word.

But now, during the afternoon rest, Yusuf began to think. His mind was free to wander with nothing to occupy it.... It would be very rare indeed if on such occasions some foolish idea did not cross the mind.... Thus his eyes fell on the box. He began to look at it. "A pretty little box!... Why, it does not seem to be locked.... And how light it is! Is it possible that there is anything inside? So light.... Perhaps it is empty?" Yusuf stretched out his hand as though to open it. Suddenly he thought better of it: "But no.... Full or empty, whatever is in this box is not my concern. My Guru asked me to deliver it to his friend, nothing more. And that's all that concerns me. I should not care about anything else."

For some time Yusuf sat quietly. But his mind would not remain quiet. The box was still there before his eyes. A pretty little box. "It seems quite empty," he thought, "what harm would there be in opening an empty box?... If it had been locked I would understand, that would be bad.... A box which is not even locked, it can't be very serious. I'll just open it for a moment and then shut it again."

Yusuf's thought turned round and round that box. It was impossible to detach himself from it, impossible to control this idea that had crept into him. "Let me see, only a quick glance, just a glance." Once again he stretched out his hand, drew it back once more, then again sat still. All in vain. Finally Yusuf made up his mind and gently, very gently, he opened the box. Hardly had he opened it than pfft! a little mouse jumped out... and

disappeared. The poor mouse all stifled in its box did not waste a second in leaping to freedom!

Yusuf was bewildered. He opened his eyes wide and gazed and gazed. The box lay there empty. Then his heart started throbbing sadly: "So, the Mahatma had sent only a mouse, a tiny little mouse.... And I couldn't even carry it safe and sound to the end. Indeed I have committed a serious fault. What shall I do now?"

Yusuf was full of regrets. But there was nothing more to do now. In vain he went round the tree, in vain he looked up and down the road. The little mouse had actually fled.... With a trembling hand Yusuf closed the lid and in dismay resumed his journey.

When he reached the river Neela and the house of his Master's friend, Yusuf handed the Mahatma's present to him and waited silently in a corner because of the fault he had committed. This man was a great saint. He opened the box and immediately understood what had happened. "Well, Yusuf," he said, turning to the young aspirant, "so you have lost that mouse.... Mahatma Junun won't give you initiation, I am afraid, for in order to be worthy of the supreme Knowledge one must have a perfect mastery over one's mind. Your Master clearly had some doubts about your will-power, that is why he resorted to this little trick, to put you to the test. And if you are not able to accomplish so insignificant a thing as to keep a little mouse in a box, how do you expect to keep great thoughts in your head, the true Knowledge in your heart? Nothing is insignificant, Yusuf. Return to your Master. Learn steadiness of character, perseverance. Be worthy of trust so as to become one day the true disciple of that great Soul."

Crestfallen, Yusuf returned to the Mahatma and confessed his fault. "Yusuf," he said, "you have lost a wonderful opportunity. I gave you a worthless mouse to take care of and you couldn't do even that! How then do you expect to keep the most precious of all treasures, the divine Truth? For that you must

have self-control. Go and learn. Learn to be master of your mind, for without that nothing great can be accomplished."

Yusuf went away ashamed, head down, and from then on he had only one thought: to become master of himself.... For years and years he made tireless efforts, he underwent a hard and difficult tapasya, and finally succeeded in becoming master of his nature. Then, full of confidence Yusuf went back to his Master. The Mahatma was overjoyed to see him again and find him ready. And this is how Yusuf received from Mahatma Junun the great initiation.

Many, many years went by, Yusuf grew in wisdom and mastery. He became one of the greatest and most exceptional saints of Islam.

(*Mother speaks to the children.*) So, this is to tell you that you must not be impatient, that you must understand that in order to really possess knowledge, whatever it may be, you must put it into practice, that is, master your nature so as to be able to express this knowledge in action.

All of you who have come here have been told many things; you have been put into contact with a world of truth, you live within it, the air you breathe is full of it; and yet how few of you know that these truths are valuable only if they are put into practice, and that it is useless to talk of consciousness, knowledge, equality of soul, universality, infinity, eternity, supreme truth, the divine presence and... of all sorts of things like that, if you make no effort yourselves to *live* these things and feel them concretely within you. And don't tell yourselves, "Oh, I have been here so many years! Oh, I would very much like to have the result of my efforts!" You must know that very persistent efforts, a very steadfast endurance are necessary to master the least weakness, the least pettiness, the least meanness in one's nature. What is the use of talking about divine Love if one can't love without egoism? What is the use of talking about immortality if one is stubbornly attached to the past and the present and if one doesn't want to give anything in order to receive everything?

You are still very young, but you must learn *right away* that to reach the goal you must know how to pay the price, and that to understand the supreme truths you must put them into practice in your daily life.

That's all.

27 March 1957

"Wherever thou seest a great end, be sure of a great beginning. Where a monstrous and painful destruction appals thy mind, console it with the certainty of a large and great creation. God is there not only in the still small voice, but in the fire and in the whirlwind.

"The greater the destruction, the freer the chances of creation; but the destruction is often long, slow and oppressive, the creation tardy in its coming or interrupted in its triumph. The night returns again and again and the day lingers or seems even to have been a false dawning. Despair not therefore but watch and work. Those who hope violently, despair swiftly: neither hope nor fear, but be sure of God's purpose and thy will to accomplish.

"The hand of the divine Artist works often as if it were unsure of its genius and its material. It seems to touch and test and leave, to pick up and throw away and pick up again, to labour and fail and botch and repiece together. Surprises and disappointments are the order of his work before all things are ready. What was selected, is cast away into the abyss of reprobation; what was rejected, becomes the cornerstone of a mighty edifice. But behind all this is the sure eye of a knowledge which surpasses our reason and the slow smile of an infinite ability.

"God has all time before him and does not need to be always in a hurry. He is sure of his aim and success and cares not if he break his work a hundred times to bring it nearer perfection. Patience is our first great necessary lesson, but not the dull slowness to move of the timid, the sceptical, the weary, the slothful, the unambitious

or the weakling; a patience full of a calm and gathering strength which watches and prepares itself for the hour of swift great strokes, few but enough to change destiny.

"Wherefore God hammers so fiercely at his world, tramples and kneads it like dough, casts it so often into the blood-bath and the red hell-heat of the furnace? Because humanity in the mass is still a hard, crude and vile ore which will not otherwise be smelted and shaped; as is his material, so is his method. Let it help to transmute itself into nobler and purer metal, his ways with it will be gentler and sweeter, much loftier and fairer its uses.

"Wherefore he selected or made such a material, when he had all infinite possibility to choose from? Because of his divine Idea which saw before it not only beauty and sweetness and purity, but also force and will and greatness. Despise not force, nor hate it for the ugliness of some of its faces, nor think that love only is God. All perfect perfection must have something in it of the stuff of the hero and even of the Titan. But the greatest force is born out of the greatest difficulty."

Thoughts and Glimpses, SABCL, Vol. 16, pp. 392–93

After all, the whole problem is to know whether humanity has reached the state of pure gold or whether it still needs to be tested in the crucible.

One thing is evident, humanity has not become pure gold; that is visible and certain.

But something has happened in the world's history which allows us to hope that a selected few in humanity, a small number of beings, perhaps, are ready to be transformed into pure gold and that they will be able to manifest strength without violence, heroism without destruction and courage without catastrophe.

But in the very next paragraph Sri Aurobindo gives the answer: "If man could once consent to be spiritualised." If only the individual could *consent* to be spiritualised... could consent.[1]

Something in him asks for it, aspires, and all the rest refuses, wants to continue to be what it is: the mixed ore which needs to be cast into the furnace.

At the moment we are at a decisive turning-point in the history of the earth, once again. From every side I am asked, "What is going to happen?" Everywhere there is anguish, expectation, fear. "What is going to happen?..." There is only one reply: "If only man could consent to be spiritualised."

And perhaps it would be enough if some individuals became pure gold, for this would be enough to change the course of events.... We are faced with this necessity in a very urgent way.

This courage, this heroism which the Divine wants of us, why not use it to fight against one's own difficulties, one's own imperfections, one's own obscurities? Why not heroically face the furnace of inner purification so that it does not become necessary to pass once more through one of those terrible, gigantic destructions which plunge an entire civilisation into darkness?

This is the problem before us. It is for each one to solve it in his own way.

This evening I am answering the questions I have been asked, and my reply is that of Sri Aurobindo: If man could once consent to be spiritualised....

And I add: Time presses... from the human point of view.

[1] "All would change if man could once consent to be spiritualised; but his nature, mental and vital and physical, is rebellious to the higher law. He loves his imperfection."

3 April 1957

"All would change if man could once consent to be spiritualised; but his nature, mental and vital and physical, is rebellious to the higher law. He loves his imperfection.

"The Spirit is the truth of our being; mind and life and body in their imperfection are its masks, but in their perfection should be its moulds. To be spiritual only is not enough; that prepares a number of souls for heaven, but leaves the earth very much where it was. Neither is a compromise the way of salvation.

"The world knows three kinds of revolution. The material has strong results, the moral and intellectual are infinitely larger in their scope and richer in their fruits, but the spiritual are the great sowings.

"If the triple change could coincide in a perfect correspondence, a faultless work would be done; but the mind and body of mankind cannot hold perfectly a strong spiritual inrush: most is spilt, much of the rest is corrupted. Many intellectual and physical upturnings of our soil are needed to work out a little result from a large spiritual sowing.

"Each religion has helped mankind. Paganism increased in man the light of beauty, the largeness and height of his life, his aim at a many-sided perfection; Christianity gave him some vision of divine love and charity; Buddhism has shown him a noble way to be wiser, gentler, purer; Judaism and Islam how to be religiously faithful in action and zealously devoted to God; Hinduism has opened to him the largest and profoundest spiritual possibilities. A great thing would be done if all these God-visions could embrace and cast themselves

into each other; but intellectual dogma and cult-egoism stand in the way.

"All religions have saved a number of souls, but none yet has been able to spiritualise mankind. For that there is needed not cult and creed, but a sustained and all-comprehending effort at spiritual self-evolution.

"The changes we see in the world today are intellectual, moral, physical in their ideal and intention: the spiritual revolution waits for its hour and throws up meanwhile its waves here and there. Until it comes the sense of the others cannot be understood and till then all interpretations of present happening and forecast of man's future are vain things. For its nature, power, event are that which will determine the next cycle of our humanity."

Thoughts and Glimpses, SABCL, Vol. 16, pp. 393–94

Mother, here Sri Aurobindo writes: "A great thing would be done if all these God-visions could embrace and cast themselves into each other; but intellectual dogma and cult-egoism stand in the way."

How is it possible to fuse into one all these views?

It is not in the mental consciousness that these things can be harmonised and synthesised. For this it is necessary to rise above and find the idea behind the thought. Sri Aurobindo shows here, for example, what each of these religions represents in human effort, aspiration and realisation. Instead of taking these religions in their outward forms which are precisely dogmas and intellectual conceptions, if we take them in their spirit, in the principle they represent, there is no difficulty in unifying them. They are simply different aspects of human progress which complete each other perfectly well and should be united with many others yet to form a more total and more complete progress, a more perfect understanding of life, a more integral approach

to the Divine. And even this unification which already demands a return to the Spirit behind things, is not enough; there must be added to it a vision of the future, the goal towards which humanity is moving, the future realisation of the world, that last "spiritual revolution" Sri Aurobindo speaks about, which will open a new age, that is, the supramental revolution.

In the supramental consciousness all these things are no longer contradictory or exclusive. They all become complementary. It is only the mental form which divides. What this mental form represents should be united to what all the other mental forms represent in order to make a harmonious whole. And that is the essential difference between a religion and the true spiritual life.

Religion exists almost exclusively in its forms, its cults, in a certain set of ideas, and it becomes great only through the spirituality of a few exceptional individuals, whereas true spiritual life, and above all what the supramental realisation will be, is independent of every precise, intellectual form, every limited form of life. It embraces all possibilities and manifestations and makes them the expression, the vehicle of a higher and more universal truth.

A new religion would not only be useless but very harmful. It is a new *life* which must be created; it is a new *consciousness* which must be expressed. This is something beyond intellectual limits and mental formulae. It is a living truth which must manifest.

Everything in its essence and its truth should be included in this realisation. This realisation must be an expression as total, as complete, as universal as possible of the divine reality. Only that can save humanity and the world. That is the great spiritual revolution of which Sri Aurobindo speaks. And this is what he wanted us to realise.

He has traced its broad outline in the very book we shall start reading next Wednesday: *The Supramental Manifestation.*

And the first sentence I read today remains the key of the

entire problem not only for the individual but also for the collectivity:

> *"All would change if man could once consent to be spiritualised; but his nature, mental and vital and physical, is rebellious to the higher law. He loves his imperfection."*

I would like us to take this as the subject of our meditation.

(*Meditation*)

10 April 1957

"Another invaluable result of these activities [sports, etc.] is the growth of what has been called the sporting spirit. That includes good humour and tolerance and consideration for all, a right attitude and friendliness to competitors and rivals, self-control and scrupulous observance of the laws of the game, fair play and avoidance of the use of foul means, an equal acceptance of victory or defeat without bad humour, resentment or ill-will towards successful competitors, loyal acceptance of the decisions of the appointed judge, umpire or referee. These qualities have their value for life in general and not only for sport, but the help that sport can give to their development is direct and invaluable. If they could be made more common not only in the life of the individual but in the national life and in the international where at the present day the opposite tendencies have become too rampant, existence in this troubled world of ours would be smoother and might open to a greater chance of concord and amity of which it stands very much in need.... even a highest and completest education of the mind is not enough without the education of the body.... The nation which possesses [these qualities] in the highest degree is likely to be the strongest for victory, success and greatness, but also for the contribution it can make towards the bringing about of unity and a more harmonious world order towards which we look as our hope for humanity's future."

The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, Vol. 16, pp. 2–4[1]

[1] This "Message" of 30 December 1948 was given for the first issue of the *Bulletin of Physical Education* of the Ashram (February 1949). It forms the introduction of *The Supramental Manifestation upon Earth*, which contains eight articles originally written by Sri Aurobindo for the *Bulletin*.

10 April 1957

Sweet Mother, during our tournaments there are many who play in a very bad spirit. They try to hurt others in order to win. And we have noticed that even the little ones are learning to do this. How could it be avoided?

With children it is above all ignorance and bad example which cause the harm. So it would be good if, before they begin their games, all the group-leaders, the captains, call together all those they are in charge of and tell them, explain to them exactly what Sri Aurobindo says here, with detailed explanations like those we have given in the two little books *The Code of Sportsmanship* and *The Ideal Child* [or *What a Child Should Always Remember*]. These things must be repeated often to the children. And then, you must warn them against bad company, bad friends, as I told you in another class.

And above all, set them the right example.... Be yourself what you would like them to be. Give them the example of disinterestedness, patience, self-control, constant good humour, the overcoming of one's little personal dislikes, a sort of constant goodwill, an understanding of others' difficulties; and that equality of temper which makes children free from fear, for what makes children deceitful and untruthful, and even cunning, is the fear of being punished. If they feel secure, they will hide nothing and you will then be able to help them to be loyal and honest. Of all things the most important is good example. Sri Aurobindo speaks of that, of the invariable good humour one must have in all circumstances, this self-forgetfulness: not to throw one's own little troubles on others; when one is tired or uncomfortable, not to become unpleasant, impatient. This asks for quite some perfection, a self-control which is a great step on the path of realisation. If one fulfilled the conditions needed to be a true leader, even if only a leader of a small group of children, well, one would already be far advanced in the discipline needed for the accomplishment of the yoga.

It is from this aspect that the problem should be seen, the

aspect of self-mastery, of control, of the endurance which will not allow your personal condition to react on your group-work or collective action. To forget oneself is one of the most essential conditions for being a true leader: to have no selfish interests, to want nothing for oneself, to consider only the good of the group, of the whole, the totality that depends on one; to act only with that aim in mind, without wanting any personal profit from one's action.

A leader of a small group can thus become a perfect leader for a large group, for a nation, and prepare himself for a collective role. It is a training-ground of great importance, and that is truly what we have attempted and are continuing to try out here: to give to everyone as soon as possible a responsibility, big or small, so that he learns to become a true leader.

To be a true leader one must be completely disinterested and efface from oneself as much as possible all self-regard and all selfish movements. To be a leader one must master one's ego, and to master one's ego is the first indispensable step for doing yoga. And this is what can make sports a powerful aid for the realisation of the Divine.

Very few people understand this, and generally those who are against this outer discipline of sports, this concentration on the material realisation, are people who *completely* lack control over their physical being. And to realise the integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo the control of one's body is a first *indispensable* step. Those who despise physical activities are people who won't be able to take a single step on the true path of integral yoga, unless they first get rid of their contempt. Control of the body in all its forms is an indispensable basis. A body which dominates you is an enemy, it is a disorder you cannot accept. It is the enlightened will in the mind which should govern the body, and not the body which should impose its law on the mind. When one knows that a thing is bad, one must be capable of not doing it. When one wants something to be realised, one must be able to do it and not be stopped at every step by the body's inability or ill-will or

lack of collaboration; and for that one must follow a physical discipline and become master in one's own home.

It is very fine to escape into meditation and from the height of one's so-called grandeur look down on material things, but one who is not master in his own home is a slave.

(*Silence*)

No questions over there? No?

> *Mother, one of the problems that arises in physical activities is that in order to be perfect at one game or one particular activity, one needs to concentrate only on that game or activity.*

That is quite wrong. In the very first issue of the *Bulletin* I explained this in full detail.[2] It is altogether wrong. Indeed someone who has acquired control over himself and developed the power of concentration can apply this power of concentration to things that are apparently extremely different, even sometimes opposite, and he ought to be able to do them without one thing interfering with the other.

There is only the question of time to be considered, but this question may be resolved by two things: first by an enlightened and methodical organisation of one's life, then by doing away with the wastage of time which most people spend in useless activities — if these were to disappear it would be a blessing for everyone — and first among them I put chattering, that is, speaking uselessly, among friends, colleagues... in all activities. The time one can waste in talking is tremendous! When one word would be enough, one says fifty. And that is not the only loss of time.... Actually, when one is short of time, it means one does not know how to organise one's life. Of course, there are

[2] "Concentration and Dispersion", *Bulletin*, April 1949.

people who do too many things, but that too shows a lack of organisation in life.

A true organisation gives a place to each thing to the extent that it is required. You all know very well that with ten to fifteen minutes of well-coordinated exercises, you can give your body all the necessary training. This you have been taught here and it has been proved to you. For the balance of the body this is enough. Naturally there are all sorts of other qualities given by games, but you don't play for more than an hour each day at the most, as far as I know, and that is not much time spent in the day.

It is an excuse! Organise your life and you will see that you have room for everything... even for being a good student.

17 April 1957

"Perfection is the true aim of all culture, the spiritual and psychic, the mental, the vital and it must be the aim of our physical culture also. If our seeking is for a total perfection of the being, the physical part of it cannot be left aside; for the body is the material basis, the body is the instrument which we have to use. Śarīram khalu dharmasādhanam, *says the old Sanskrit adage, — the body is the means of fulfilment of dharma, and dharma means every ideal which we can propose to ourselves and the law of its working out and its action. A total perfection is the ultimate aim which we set before us, for our ideal is the Divine Life which we wish to create here, the life of the Spirit fulfilled on earth, life accomplishing its own spiritual transformation even here on earth in the conditions of the material universe. That cannot be unless the body too undergoes a transformation, unless its action and functioning attain to a supreme capacity and the perfection which is possible to it or which can be made possible."*

The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, Vol. 16, p. 5

Mother, how can the functioning of the body "attain to a supreme capacity"?

Precisely by transformation. This implies a total transformation. Sri Aurobindo speaks about it later in what follows.

For the moment, our body is simply a doubtful improvement on the animal body, for if we have gained from a certain point of view, we have lost from another. It is certain that from the point of view of purely physical capacities many animals are superior to us. Unless by a special culture and transformation

we succeed in really transforming our capacities, it could be said that from the point of view of strength and muscular power a tiger or a lion is far superior to us. From the point of view of agility a monkey is far superior to us; and, for instance, a bird can travel without needing any exterior mechanism or plane, which is not yet possible for us... and so on. And we are bound by the animal necessities of the functioning of our organs; so long as we depend, for instance, on material food, on absorbing matter in such a crude form, we shall be quite inferior animals.

Therefore, I don't want to anticipate what we are going to read, but all this purely animal functioning of our body, all this part which is exactly the same as in animal life — that we depend for life on the circulation of the blood and to have blood we need to eat, and so on, and all that this implies — these are terrible limitations and bondages! As long as material life depends on that, it is obvious that we won't be able to divinise our life.

So, we must assume that animality in the human being should be replaced by another source of life, and this is quite conceivable — not only conceivable but partially realisable; and this is obviously the aim we ought to set before ourselves if we want to transform matter and make it capable of expressing divine qualities.

In the very, very old traditions — there was a tradition more ancient than the Vedic and the Chaldean which must have been the source of both — in that ancient tradition there is already mention of a "glorious body" which would be plastic enough to be transformed at every moment by the deeper consciousness: it would express that consciousness, it would have no fixity of form. It mentioned luminosity: the constituent matter could become luminous at will. It mentioned a sort of possibility of weightlessness which would allow the body to move about in the air only by the action of will-power and by certain processes of control of the inner energy, and so on. Much has been said about these things.

I don't know if there ever were beings on earth who had partially realised this, but in a very small way there have been partial instances of one thing or another, examples which go to prove that it is possible. And following up this idea, one could go so far as to conceive of the replacement of material organs and their functioning as it now is, by centres of concentration of force and energy which would be receptive to the higher forces and which, by a kind of alchemy, would use them for the necessities of life and the body. We already speak of the different "centres" in the body — this knowledge is very widespread among people who have practised yoga — but these centres could be perfected to the point where they replace the different organs by a direct action of the higher energy and vibrations on matter. Those who have practised occultism well enough, in its most integral form, it could be said, know the process of materialisation of subtle energies and can put them in contact with physical vibrations. Not only is it something that can be done, but it is something which *is* done. And all that is a science, a science which must itself be perfected, completed, and which will obviously be used for the creation and setting in action of new bodies which will be able to manifest the supramental life in the material world.

But, as Sri Aurobindo says, before this can be done, it is good to utilise all that we have in order to increase and make more exact the control of physical activities. It is very obvious that those who practise physical culture scientifically and with coordination acquire a control over their bodies that's unimaginable for ordinary people. When the Russian gymnasts came here, we saw with what ease they did exercises which for an ordinary man are impossible, and they did them as if it was the simplest thing in the world; there was not even the least sign of effort! Well, that mastery is already a great step towards the transformation of the body. And these people who, I could say, are materialists by profession, used no spiritual method in their education; it was solely by material means and an enlightened

use of human will that they had achieved this result. If they had added to this a spiritual knowledge and power, they could have achieved an almost miraculous result.... Because of the false ideas prevalent in the world, we don't usually see the two things together, spiritual mastery and material mastery, and so one is always incomplete without the other; but this is exactly what we want to do and what Sri Aurobindo is going to explain: if the two are combined, the result can reach a perfection that's unthinkable for the ordinary human mind, and this is what we want to attempt.

As he goes on to say — we shall probably read it next time — first one has to fight against a formidable mass of stupid prejudices which create an irreconcilable antagonism between material and spiritual life. And it is something so deep-rooted in human consciousness that it is very difficult to eradicate it, even in those who think they have understood Sri Aurobindo's teaching! And many people said, when for altogether different reasons I began to hold meditations again, "Ah! At last! We are returning to spiritual life...." This was indeed what prevented me from holding them for a long time. It was in order not to encourage this stupidity. But for other reasons it was necessary to do it and so I did. So long as this foolishness is not uprooted from human consciousness, the supramental force will always find it considerably difficult not to be engulfed in the obscurity of a human thought which understands nothing. That's all. All the same, we shall succeed.

I chose this book, *The Supramental Manifestation*, in order to have the opportunity of putting you into contact with a truth expressed in an almost combative form, in order to fight against this old division, this total lack of understanding of the eternal Truth.

And perhaps, when we have finished reading it, I shall be able to tell you why we have started the meditations again — but certainly not "to return to spiritual life"!

And it is so deep-rooted. Oh! Even those who outwardly

profess to understand — when they think of the spiritual life, they immediately think of meditation.

There we are. Now, we shall have one all the same, but for another reason!

(*Meditation*)

24 April 1957

"A divine life in a material world implies necessarily a union of the two ends of existence, the spiritual summit and the material base. The soul with the basis of its life established in Matter ascends to the heights of the Spirit but does not cast away its base, it joins the heights and the depths together. The Spirit descends into Matter and the material world with all its lights and glories and powers and with them fills and transforms life in the material world so that it becomes more and more divine. The transformation is not a change into something purely subtle and spiritual to which Matter is in its nature repugnant and by which it is felt as an obstacle or as a shackle binding the Spirit; it takes up Matter as a form of the Spirit though now a form which conceals and turns it into a revealing instrument, it does not cast away the energies of Matter, its capacities, its methods; it brings out their hidden possibilities, uplifts, sublimates, discloses their innate divinity. The divine life will reject nothing that is capable of divinisation; all is to be seized, exalted, made utterly perfect.

"In the pursuit of perfection we can start at either end of our range of being and we have then to use, initially at least, the means and processes proper to our choice. In Yoga the process is spiritual and psychic; even its vital and physical processes are given a spiritual or psychic turn and raised to a higher motion than belongs properly to the ordinary life and Matter, as for instance in the Hathayogic and Rajayogic use of the breathing or the use of Asana.... On the other hand, if we start in any field at the lower end we have to employ the means and processes which Life and Matter offer to us and respect the

conditions and what we may call the technique imposed by the vital and the material energy. We may extend the activity, the achievement, the perfection attained beyond the initial, even beyond the normal possibilities but still we have to stand on the same base with which we started and within the boundaries it gives to us. It is not that the action from the two ends cannot meet and the higher take into itself and uplift the lower perfection; but this can usually be done only by a transition from the lower to a higher outlook, aspiration and motive: this we shall have to do if our aim is to transform the human into the divine life. But here there comes in the necessity of taking up the activities of human life and sublimating them by the power of the spirit. Here the lower perfection will not disappear; it will remain but will be enlarged and transformed by the higher perfection which only the power of the spirit can give."

The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, Vol. 16, pp. 5–8

Sweet Mother, here Sri Aurobindo speaks of "the higher perfection" and "the lower perfection"...

The higher perfection is the spiritual perfection, integral union with the Divine, identification with the Divine, freedom from all the limitations of the lower world. That is spiritual perfection, the perfection that comes from yoga — quite independent of the body and the physical world — which, in ancient times, meant first rejecting the body and the physical life so as to have a relation only with the higher world and finally with the Divine. That is the higher perfection.

And the lower perfection is to be able to make the human being in his present form and in his body, in his relation with all terrestrial things, do the utmost he can. This is the case of all great men of genius: artistic genius, literary genius, genius in organisation, the great rulers, those who have carried physical

capacities to their maximum perfection, human development to the limit of its possibilities; and, for instance, all those who have complete control over their bodies and succeed in doing miraculous things, as we saw, for example, during the war, with the airmen: they made their bodies do things which at first sight seemed quite impossible, they obtained from them an endurance, a skill, a power which were almost unthinkable. And from every point of view: from the point of view of physical strength, of intellectual realisation, of the physical qualities of energy and courage, of disinterestedness, goodness, charity; all human qualities carried to their utmost limits. That is the lower perfection.

The higher perfection is spiritual and super-human. The lower perfection is human perfection carried to its maximum limits, and this may be quite independent of all spiritual life, all spiritual aspiration. One can be a genius without having any spiritual aspiration. One can have all the most extraordinary moral qualities without having any spiritual life. And even, usually, those who have a very great power of human realisation are satisfied — more or less satisfied — with their condition. They feel they are self-sufficient, that they carry in themselves the source of their realisation and their joy, and it is usually very difficult to make them understand and feel that they are not the creators of their own creations, whatever they may be. Most of them, with very rare exceptions, if they were told, "You are not the originator of this work you are doing, it is a force higher than you and you are only its instrument", they would dislike it very much — and they will send you about your business! Therefore, these two perfections are really divergent in ordinary life. It was said in the old yoga that the first condition for doing yoga was to be disgusted with life. But those who have realised this human perfection are very rarely disgusted with life, unless they have met with personal difficulties such as the ingratitude of people around them, the lack of understanding of their genius which was not sufficiently appreciated — so all this disgusts them, but

otherwise, so long as they are in their period of success and creation, they are perfectly satisfied. So, as they are satisfied — above all, self-satisfied — they don't need to seek anything else.

It is not essentially true, but this is usually how things happen, and unless there is in this genius a soul which is perfectly conscious of itself and has come to accomplish a specific work on earth, he may very well be born, grow up and die without knowing that there is anything other than this earthly life. And above all it is this, you see, this feeling of having achieved the utmost realisation which gives a satisfaction that keeps one from needing anything else.... If they have a soul that's fully conscious of itself and fully conscious of its purpose in the physical world, there could be a vague feeling that all this is pretty hollow, that all these achievements are a little too superficial and that something is lacking; but that comes only to those who are predestined, and after all, in the mass of humanity, there are not very many of them.

Only those who are predestined can combine these two perfections and realise something integral.... This is quite rare. The great spiritual leaders have very rarely been great realisers in the physical world. It has happened, but it is very rare. Only those who are conscious incarnations of the Divine naturally carry in themselves the possibility of the two perfections, but this is exceptional. People who had a spiritual life, a great spiritual realisation, were able at certain exceptional moments to have a capacity for outward realisation; this also was exceptional, but it was intermittent and never had the integrality, the totality, the perfection of those who concentrated on material realisation. And this is why those who live only in the external consciousness, for whom the earthly material life is all that really exists, concrete and tangible, perceptible to all, always feel that spiritual life is something hazy, something almost mediocre from the material point of view.

I have met many people — "many", well, quite a number

— who wanted to demonstrate that spiritual powers gave a great capacity for outer realisation and who tried, in certain exceptional spiritual states or conditions, to paint or to compose music or write poetry; well, everything that they produced was thoroughly second-rate and could not be compared with the works of the great geniuses who had mastered material nature — and this of course gave the materialists a good opening: "You see, your so-called power is nothing at all." But this was because in their external life they were ordinary men; for the greatest spiritual power, if it enters material that's not educated, will produce a result far superior to what that individual would have been able to achieve in his ordinary state, but far inferior to what a genius who has mastered matter can produce. It is not enough that "the Spirit bloweth", the instrument must also be capable of manifesting it.

I believe that is one of the things Sri Aurobindo is going to explain: why it is necessary to give to the physical, external being, its full development, the capacity of controlling matter directly; then you put at the disposal of the Spirit an instrument capable of manifesting it, otherwise... Yes, I knew several people who in their ordinary state could not write three lines without making a mistake, not only spelling mistakes but mistakes of language, that is, who could not express one thought clearly — well, in their moments of spiritual inspiration, they used to write very beautiful things, but all the same these very beautiful things were not so beautiful as the works of the greatest writers. These things seemed remarkable in comparison with what they could do in their ordinary state; it was true, their present possibilities were used to the maximum, it was something that gave a value to what otherwise would have had none at all. But supposing you take a real genius — a musician or artist or writer of genius — who has fully mastered his instrument, who can use it to produce works that express the utmost human possibility, if you add to this a spiritual consciousness, the supramental force, then you will have something truly divine.

And this is precisely the key to the effort Sri Aurobindo wanted us to make.

And your body, if you draw from it all the possibilities it holds, if you educate it by the normal, well-known, scientific methods, if you make this instrument into something as perfect as possible, then, when the supramental truth manifests in that body, it will become *immediately* — without centuries of preparation — a marvellous instrument for the expression of the Spirit.

That is why Sri Aurobindo used to repeat and has always said: You must work from both ends, not let go of one for the other. And certainly, if you want to have a divine consciousness, you must not give up spiritual aspiration; but if you want to become an integral divine being on earth, take good care not to let go of the other end, and make your body the best possible instrument.

It is a disease of the ordinary human intellect — which comes, moreover, from separation, division — to make a thing always *either* this *or* that. If you choose this, you turn your back on that; if you choose that, you turn your back on this.

It is an impoverishment. One must know how to take up everything, combine everything, synthesise everything. And then one has an integral realisation.

(*Turning to the children*) Do you have anything to say?

It is much better to do than to say. Now I have given you some encouragement.

1 May 1957

"In the admission of an activity such as sports and physical exercises into the life of the Ashram it is evident that the methods and the first objects to be attained must belong to what we have called the lower end of the being. Originally they have been introduced for the physical education and bodily development of the children of the Ashram School and these are too young for a strictly spiritual aim or practice to enter into their activities.... Yet what can be attained within the human boundaries can be something very considerable and sometimes immense: what we call genius is part of the development of the human range of being and its achievements, especially in things of the mind and will, can carry us halfway to the divine. Even what the mind and will can do with the body in the field proper to the body and its life, in the way of physical achievement, bodily endurance, feats of prowess of all kinds, a lasting activity refusing fatigue or collapse and continuing beyond what seems at first to be possible, courage and refusal to succumb under an endless and murderous physical suffering, these and other victories of many kinds sometimes approaching or reaching the miraculous are seen in the human field and must be reckoned as a part of our concept of a total perfection....

"The body, we have said, is a creation of the Inconscient and itself inconscient or at least subconscient in parts of itself and much of its hidden action; but what we call the Inconscient is an appearance, a dwelling place, an instrument of a secret Consciousness or a Superconscient which has created the miracle we call the universe. Matter is the field and the creation of the Inconscient and

the perfection of the operations of inconscient Matter, their perfect adaptation of means to an aim and end, the wonders they perform and the marvels of beauty they create, testify, in spite of all the ignorant denial we can oppose, to the presence and power of consciousness of this Superconscience in every part and movement of the material universe. It is there in the body, has made it and its emergence in our consciousness is the secret aim of evolution and the key to the mystery of our existence."

The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, Vol. 16, pp. 9–11

Mother, are sports competitions essential to our progress?

From the point of view of moral education they are rather essential, for if one can take part in them in the right spirit, it is a very good opportunity for mastering one's ego. If one does it without trying to overcome one's weaknesses and lower movements, one obviously doesn't know how to profit by them, and it does no good; but if one has the will to play in the right spirit, without any movement of a lower kind, without jealousy or ambition, keeping an attitude which could be called "fair play", that is, doing one's best and not caring about the result; if one can put in the utmost effort without being upset because one has not met with success or things have not turned out in one's favour, then it is very useful. One can come out of all these competitions with a greater self-control and a detachment from results which are a great help to the formation of an exceptional character. Naturally, if you do it in the ordinary way and with all the ordinary reactions and ugly movements, it doesn't help anything at all; but that holds good in no matter what one does; whether in the field of sports or the intellectual field, anywhere, if one acts in the ordinary way, well, one wastes one's time. But if when playing or taking part in tournaments and competitions, you keep the right spirit, it is a very good education, for it compels you to

make a special effort and to exceed your ordinary limits a little. It is certainly an opportunity to make conscious many of your movements which otherwise would always remain unconscious.

But naturally, you must not forget that this must be an opportunity and a means for progress. If you just let yourselves go and play in an altogether ordinary manner, you are wasting your time; but it is the same for everything, not only for this: for studies and for anything at all. Everything *always* depends on the way in which things are done, not so much on what one does but on the spirit in which one does it.

If you were all yogis and did everything you do with your utmost effort and to your utmost possibilities, as well as you can do it and always with the idea of doing it better still, then, obviously, there would be no need of competitions, prizes, rewards; but, as Sri Aurobindo writes, little children cannot be expected to be yogis, and during the period of preparation a stimulus is necessary for the most material consciousness to make an effort for progress.... And this period of childhood may last for many years!

The ideal would be exactly what I have written in the last *Bulletin*,[1] I don't know if you have read it, but I have written something like this:

Have no ambition,
above all pretend nothing,
but be at every moment
the utmost that you can be.

That is the ideal state in the integral life — whatever one does. And if one realises that, well, one is certainly very far on the path of perfection.... But it is obvious that a certain inner maturity is needed to do this in all sincerity. You may set this as a programme for yourselves.

If you like we shall take it as the subject of our meditation.

(*Meditation*)

[1] April 1957.

8 May 1957

Mother, usually we see that many of us take an interest in the games and activities in which there is some excitement, but few take interest in serious activities, serious exercises. Why is that?

Because in the vast majority of cases, what gives interest is vital satisfaction. For you to be interested in training exercises which don't have the stimulus of games, the reason must govern the being. In ordinary men reason is the summit of human consciousness, and this is the part of the being which must govern the rest, for it is orderly and reasonable, that is, it does things with a feeling for order, for goodness, usefulness, and in accordance with a plan, a specific plan, recognised and used by each one, whereas the vital part of the being likes excitement, the unexpected, adventure — all that makes games attractive — above all, competition, the effort to win, victory over the opponent, all these things; it is the vital impulse, and the vital in man being the seat of enthusiasm, ardour, normal energy, when the attraction of the unexpected, of struggle and victory is not there, it goes to sleep, unless it is in the habit of obeying, regularly and spontaneously, the will of the reason. And this is even one of the first things for which all physical training is useful: the fact that it cannot be done really well unless the body is in the habit of obeying the reason rather than the vital impulse. For instance, the whole development of bodily perfection, of physical culture with dumb-bells and the exercises which have nothing particularly exciting and demand a discipline, habits which must be regular, reasonable, which give no scope to passion, desire, impulse — one must order one's life according to a very strict and very regular discipline — well, in order to do them really well one must be in the habit of governing one's life by the reason.

This is not very common. Usually, unless one has taken good care to make it otherwise, the impulses — the impulses of desire — all the enthusiasms and passions with all their reactions are the masters of human life. One must already be something of a sage to be able to undergo a rigorous discipline of the body and obtain from it the ordered, regular effort which can perfect it. There is no longer any room there for all the fancies of desire. You see, as soon as one gives way to excesses, to immoderation of any kind and a disorderly life, it becomes quite impossible to control one's body and develop it normally, not to mention that, naturally, one spoils one's health and as a result the most important part of the ideal of a perfect body disappears; for with bad health, impaired health, one is not much good for anything. And it is certainly the satisfaction of desires and impulses of the vital or the unreasonable demands of certain ambitions which make the body suffer and fall ill.

Naturally, there is all the ignorance of those who don't even know the most elementary rules of life; but everybody knows one must learn how to live and, for instance, that fire burns and water can drown! People don't need to be told all that, it is something they learn fast as they grow up; but the fact that the control of reason over life is absolutely indispensable even for good health, is not always accepted by the inferior man for whom life has no savour unless he can live out his passions.

I remember a man who came here a very long time ago, to stand as a candidate for the government. It so happened that he was introduced to me because they wanted my opinion of him, and so he asked me questions about the Ashram and the life we lead here, and about what I considered to be an indispensable discipline for life. This man used to smoke the whole day and drank much more than was necessary, and so he complained, you see, that he was often tired and sometimes could not control himself. I told him, "You know, first of all, you must stop smoking and you must stop drinking." He looked at me with an unbelievable bewilderment and said, "But then, if

one doesn't either smoke or drink, it is not worth living!" I told him, "If you are still at that stage, it is no use saying anything more."

And this is much more frequent than one thinks. To us it seems absurd, for we have something else which is of course more interesting than smoking and drinking, but for ordinary men the satisfaction of their desires is the very reason for existence. For them it seems to be an affirmation of their independence and their purpose in life. And it is simply a perversion, a deformation which is a denial of the life-instinct, it is an unhealthy interference of thought and vital impulse in physical life. It is an unhealthy impulse which does not usually exist even in animals. In this case, instinct in animals is infinitely more reasonable than human instinct — which, besides, doesn't exist any more, which has been replaced by a very perverted impulse.

Perversion is a human disease, it occurs only very rarely in animals, and then only in animals which have come close to man and therefore have been contaminated by his perversion.

There is a story about some officers in North Africa — in Algeria — who had adopted a monkey. The monkey lived with them and one day at dinner they had a grotesque idea and gave the monkey something to drink. They gave it alcohol. The monkey first saw the others drink, this seemed to it something quite interesting, and it drank a glass, a full glass of wine. Afterwards it was ill, as ill as could be, it rolled under the table with all kinds of pains and was really in a very bad way, that is, it gave the men an example of the spontaneous effect of alcohol when the physical nature is not already perverted. It nearly died of poisoning. It recovered. And some time later it was again allowed to come for dinner as it was all right, and somebody placed a glass of wine in front of it. It picked it up in a terrible rage and flung it at the head of the man who had given the glass to it.... By that it showed that it was much wiser than the men!

It is a good thing to begin to learn at an early age that to lead an efficient life and obtain from one's body the maximum it is

able to give, reason must be the master of the house. And it is not a question of yoga or higher realisation, it is something which should be taught everywhere, in every school, every family, every home: man was made to be a mental being, and merely to be a man — we are not speaking of anything else, we are speaking only of being a man — life must be dominated by reason and not by vital impulses. This should be taught to all children from their infancy. If one is not dominated by reason, one is a brute lower than the animal; for animals don't have a mind or a reason to dominate them, but they obey the instinct of the species. There is an instinct of the species which is an extremely reasonable instinct that regulates all their activities for their own good, and automatically, without knowing it, they are subject to this instinct of the species which is altogether reasonable from the point of view of that species, of each species. And those animals which for some reason or other become free of it — as I was saying just a while ago, those which live near man and begin to obey man instead of obeying the instinct of the species — are perverted and lose the qualities of their species. But an animal left to its natural life and free from human influence is an extremely reasonable being from its own point of view, for it only does things which are in conformity with its nature and its own good. Naturally, it meets with disasters, for it is constantly at war with all the other species, but it does not itself act foolishly. Stupidities and perversion begin with conscious mind and the human species. It is the wrong use man makes of his mental capacity. Perversion begins with humanity. It is a distortion of the progress of Nature which mental consciousness represents. And, therefore, the first thing which should be taught to every human being as soon as he is able to think, is that he should obey reason which is a super-instinct of the species. Reason is the master of the nature of mankind. One must obey reason and absolutely refuse to be the slave of instincts. And here I am not talking to you about yoga, I am not talking about spiritual life, not at all; it has nothing to do with that. It is the basic wisdom

of human life, purely human life: every human being who obeys anything other than reason is a kind of brute lower than the animal. That's all. And this should be taught everywhere; it is the basic education which should be given to children.

The reign of reason must come to an end only with the advent of the psychic law which manifests the divine Will.

15 May 1957

Mother, since the beginning of creation, why is there this difference between male and female?

Since the beginning of which creation? Which creation are you speaking about?... Of the Earth?

Yes.

First, this is not correct. There are species in which there is no difference; and in the beginning there wasn't any — first point. Second point, the terrestrial creation is a purely material creation and is a sort of materialisation and condensation of the universal creation, but in the universal creation this difference does not necessarily exist. All the possibilities are there, and all things possible have existed and still exist, and this differentiation is not at all the basis of creation.

So your question does not stand, for it is incorrect.

But why in the material creation?

I am telling you it has not been like that from the beginning. A zoologist could tell you that there are species which are not like that at all. Nature has tried this method — it tries many things, it has made all possible species, made the two in one, made every possible thing.... It tries like this because probably this appears more practical to it! I don't know. That's all.

But on the other planes, even in the terrestrial world, the more subtle planes of the terrestrial world, even in the subtle physical and the vital and mental, there are beings divided in two like this, but also beings which are neither male nor female. They exist. For instance, in the vital world, it is extremely rare

to come across differentiations of sex, the beings are usually sexless. And I strongly suspect that the world of the gods as described to us by men, has been largely influenced by human thought. In any case, there are many deities who are without sex. In all the stories told of the pantheons of all countries, there is a good deal that has been strongly influenced by human thought. So, this difference is simply a means used by Nature to achieve its aim, that's all, nothing more than that. We must take it like that. It is not an eternal symbol — not at all.

Now, there are many people who are very keen on this distinction — they may keep it if they like! — but it is not at all something final or eternal... or perfect in itself. It was perhaps the ideal of the overmind creation, that is possible... and yet, even then not totally, only partially. But still those who are so fond of this differentiation — let them keep it if they like! If it gives them pleasure.... It has its advantages and disadvantages, many disadvantages.

Mother, then why do the forces of the vital world escape this condition?

What?

You say this differentiation does not exist in the vital world.

I don't say it doesn't exist, I say it is not a general rule and that, on the contrary, one meets sexless beings more often than those with sex. And it is also probable that in the vital world this differentiation has come mostly due to the influence of the earth.

And so, now? Why these questions and what are you driving at? That's what I want to know. Who told you that from the beginning of the universe it has been like that?... People who are extremely keen that it should continue to be like that? I say, if they like it, let them continue, nobody will disturb them.

If it makes them happy!

"There are higher levels of the mind than any we now conceive and to these we must one day reach and rise beyond them to the heights of a greater, a spiritual existence. As we rise we have to open to them our lower members and fill these with those superior and supreme dynamisms of light and power; the body we have to make a more and more and even entirely conscious frame and instrument, a conscious sign and seal and power of the spirit. As it grows in this perfection, the force and extent of its dynamic action and its response and service to the spirit must increase, the control of the spirit over it also must grow and the plasticity of its functioning both in its developed and acquired parts of power and in its automatic responses down to those that are now purely organic and seem to be the movements of a mechanic inconscience. This cannot happen without a veritable transformation and a transformation of the mind and life and very body is indeed the change to which our evolution is secretly moving and without this transformation the entire fullness of a divine life on earth cannot emerge. In this transformation the body itself can become an agent and a partner. It might indeed be possible for the spirit to achieve a considerable manifestation with only a passive and imperfectly conscious body as its last or bottommost means of material functioning, but this could not be anything perfect or complete. A fully conscious body might even discover and work out the right material method and process of a material transformation. For this, no doubt, the spirit's supreme light and power and creative joy must have manifested on the summit of the individual consciousness and sent down their fiat into the body...."

The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, Vol. 16, pp. 15–16

Mother, will the transformation of the body come after the transformation of the mind and vital, or will it follow spontaneously?

Usually this kind of transformation proceeds from above downwards, not from below upwards.

Obviously, if you are a thorough-going materialist, you will say that it is the development of the form which brings out new capacities; but still, this is not quite correct, it is not exactly like this that things usually happen, and I challenge you to transform your body before your mind has been transformed. Just try, let us see!

You cannot move a finger, say a word, walk one step without the mind's intervention; so with what instrument are you going to transform your body if your mind is not already transformed?

If you remain in the state of ignorance — of perfect ignorance, I might say — which your mind is in at present, how do you expect your body to be transformed?

Sometimes one finds a great resistance in the body. What is the reason? The mind does not interfere, but there is a resistance. The greatest resistance comes from the physical, there is a special resistance of the physical.

Where is the greatest resistance?... In your head. (*Laughter*) This is not a special case. Most often what refuses most to change is the physical mind — so obstinate, isn't it, in the conviction of its own competence, ooh!... In the love it has for its own ignorance, its own way of thinking, its own way of seeing, its own way of not knowing.

Is that all?... All right! Then we won't say anything more.

I am asking for the remedy.

Oh! Oh!... (*Long silence*).... There, that's the remedy.

29 May 1957

"A divine life in a divine body is the formula of the ideal that we envisage.... The process of the evolution upon earth has been slow and tardy — what principle must intervene if there is to be a transformation, a progressive or sudden change?

"It is indeed as a result of our evolution that we arrive at the possibility of this transformation. As Nature has evolved beyond Matter and manifested Life, beyond Life and manifested Mind, so she must evolve beyond Mind and manifest a consciousness and power of our existence free from the imperfection and limitation of our mental existence, a supramental or truth-consciousness and able to develop the power and perfection of the spirit. Here a slow and tardy change need no longer be the law or manner of our evolution; it will be only so to a greater or less extent so long as a mental ignorance clings and hampers our ascent; but once we have grown into the truth-consciousness its power of spiritual truth of being will determine all....

"It might be also that the transformation might take place by stages; there are powers of the nature still belonging to the mental region which are yet potentialities of a growing gnosis lifted beyond our human mentality and partaking of the light and power of the Divine and an ascent through these planes, a descent of them into the mental being might seem to be the natural evolutionary course. But in practice it might be found that these intermediate levels would not be sufficient for the total transformation since, being themselves illumined potentialities of mental being not yet supramental in the full sense of the word, they

> *could bring down to the mind only a partial divinity or raise the mind towards that but not effectuate its elevation into the complete supramentality of the truth-consciousness. Still these levels might become stages of the ascent which some would reach and pause there while others went higher and could reach and live on superior strata of a semi-divine existence. It is not to be supposed that all humanity would rise in a block into the supermind...."*
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> *The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, Vol. 16, pp. 20–22*

It is precisely about this progressive transformation that I am going to speak to you this evening.... I have often been asked this question, "Why, after having posited as an ideal principle that when we deal with our body we ought to do it with the knowledge that it is only a result and an instrument of the supreme Reality of the universe and of the truth of our being, — why, after having taught this and shown that this is the truth to be realised, do we have in the organisation of our Ashram, doctors, dispensaries, a physical education of the body based on modern theories accepted everywhere?" And why, when some of you go for a picnic do I forbid you to drink water from just anywhere and tell you to take filtered water with you? Why do I have the fruit you eat disinfected, etc.?

All this seems contradictory, but this evening I intend to explain something to you which, I hope, will put an end to this feeling of a contradiction in you. In fact, I have told you many a time that when two ideas or principles apparently seem to contradict one another, you must rise a little higher in your thought and find the point where the contradictions meet in a comprehensive synthesis.

Here, it is very easy if we know one thing, that the method we use to deal with our body, maintain it, keep it fit, improve it and keep it in good health, depends *exclusively* on the state of consciousness we are in; for our body is an instrument of our

consciousness and this consciousness can act directly on it and obtain what it wants from it.

So, if you are in an ordinary physical consciousness, if you see things with the eyes of the ordinary physical consciousness, if you think of them with the ordinary physical consciousness, it will be ordinary physical means you will have to use to act on your body. These ordinary physical means make up the whole science which has accumulated through thousands of years of human existence. This science is very complex, its processes innumerable, complicated, uncertain, often contradictory, always progressive and almost absolutely relative! Still, very precise results have been achieved; ever since physical culture has become a serious preoccupation, a certain number of experiments, studies, observations have accumulated, which enable us to regulate diet, activities, exercise, the whole outer organisation of life, and provide an adequate basis so that those who make the effort to study and conform strictly to these things have a chance to maintain their body in good health, correct the defects it may have and improve its general condition, and even achieve results which are sometimes quite remarkable.

I may add, moreover, that this intellectual human science, such as it is at present, in its very sincere effort to find the truth, is, surprisingly enough, drawing closer and closer to the essential truth of the Spirit. It is not impossible to foresee the movement where the two will unite in a very deep and very close understanding of the essential truth.

So, for all those who live on the physical plane, in the physical consciousness, it is physical means and processes which have to be used in dealing with the body. And as the vast majority of human beings, even in the Ashram, live in a consciousness which, if not exclusively physical, is at least predominantly physical, it is quite natural for them to follow and obey all the principles laid down by physical science for the care of the body.

Now, according to what Sri Aurobindo teaches us, this is not a final realisation, nor is it the ideal to which we want to

rise. There is a higher state than this, in which the consciousness, though it still remains principally mental or partially mental in its functioning, is already open to higher regions in an aspiration for the spiritual life, and open to the supramental influence.

As soon as this opening occurs, one passes beyond the state in which life is purely physical — when I say "physical" I include the whole mental and intellectual life and all human achievements, even the most remarkable; I am speaking of a physical which is the summit of human capacities, of an earthly and material life in which man can express values of a higher order from the mental and intellectual point of view — one can go beyond that state, open oneself to the supramental force which is now acting on earth and enter a transitional zone where the two influences meet and interpenetrate, where the consciousness is still mental and intellectual in its functioning, but sufficiently imbued with the supramental strength and force to become the instrument of a higher truth.

At present this state can be realised on earth by those who have prepared themselves to receive the supramental force which is manifesting. And in that state, in that state of consciousness, the body can benefit from a much better condition than the one it was in before. It can be put into direct contact with the essential truth of its being, to the extent that, *spontaneously*, at every moment it knows instinctively, or intuitively, what is to be done and that it can do it.

As I say, this state can now be realised by all those who take the trouble of preparing themselves to receive the supramental force, to assimilate it and obey it.

Of course, there is a higher state than this, the state Sri Aurobindo speaks of as the ideal to be fulfilled: the divine life in a divine body. But he himself tells us that this will take time; it is an integral transformation which cannot be achieved in a moment. It will even take quite a long time. But when it is accomplished, when the consciousness has become a supramental consciousness, then action will no longer be determined at every

moment by a mental choice or be dependent on the physical capacity: the entire body will spontaneously, integrally, be the perfect expression of the inner truth.

This is the ideal we must keep before us, for the realisation of which we must strive; but we must not delude ourselves and think that it can be a rapid transformation, miraculous, immediate, marvellous, without effort and without labour.

However, it is no longer only a possibility, it is no longer even only a promise for a far-off future: it is something which is in the making. And already one can not only foresee but feel the moment when the body will be able to repeat integrally the experience of the most spiritual part of the being, as the inner spirit has already done, and will itself be able to stand in its bodily consciousness before the supreme Reality, turn to it integrally and say in all sincerity, in a total self-giving of all its cells: "To be Thyself — exclusively, perfectly — Thyself, infinitely, eternally... very simply."

5 June 1957

Do you have any questions? No?

Sweet Mother, should one ask questions which don't come spontaneously?

What do you mean by a question that doesn't come spontaneously?

For, usually, in class, we often feel that if we don't ask questions you won't tell us anything, so we think and think, and we have to ask questions!

It depends on what you find! If the question is interesting... Because you make an effort to find it, it doesn't mean that it is necessarily bad.

Do you have a question of this kind?

No.

Then....

(*Long silence*)

In fact, if one reads attentively what Sri Aurobindo has written, all that he has written, one would have the answer to every question. But there are certain moments and certain ways of presenting ideas which have a dynamic effect on the consciousness and help you to make a spiritual progress. The presentation, to be effective, must necessarily be the spontaneous expression of an immediate experience. If things which have already been said are repeated in the same manner, things which belong to

past experiences, it becomes a sort of teaching, what could be called didactic talk, and it sets off some cells in the brain, but in fact is not very useful.

For me, for what I am trying to do, action in silence is *always* much more important.... The force which is at work is not limited by words, and this gives it an infinitely greater strength, and it expresses itself in each consciousness in accordance with its own particular mode, which makes it infinitely more effective. A certain vibration is given out in silence, with a special purpose, to obtain a definite result, but according to the mental receptivity of each person it is expressed in each individual consciousness exactly in the form which can be the most effective, the most active, the most immediately useful for each individual; while if it is formulated in words, this formula has to be received by each person in its fixity — the fixity of the words given to it — and it loses much of its strength and fullness of action because, first, the words are not always understood as they are said and then they are not always adapted to the understanding of each one.

So, unless a question immediately gives rise to an experience which can be expressed as a new formula, in my opinion it is always better to keep silent. Only when the question is living can it give rise to an experience which will be the occasion of a living teaching. And for a question to be alive, it must answer an inner need for progress, a spontaneous need to progress on some plane or other — on the mental plane is the most usual way, but if by chance it answers an inner aspiration, a problem one is tackling and wants to solve, then the question becomes interesting and living and truly useful, and it can give rise to a vision, a perception on a higher plane, an experience in the consciousness which can make the formula new so that it carries a new power for realisation.

Apart from such cases I always feel that it is much better not to say anything and that a few minutes of meditation are always more useful.

What I read at the beginning ought to serve to canalise the thought, to direct and focus it on a particular problem or a set of ideas or a new possibility of understanding which comes from the passage read; and in fact it is almost like a subject of meditation suggested for the silence which follows the reading.

To speak for the sake of speaking is not at all interesting — there are schools for that! Not here.

But when you speak, Sweet Mother, it is different!

(*Silence*)

(Another child) *Mother, when you speak we try to understand with the mind, but when you communicate something in silence, on what part of the being should we concentrate?*

It is always better, for meditation — you see, we use the word "meditation", but it does not necessarily mean "moving ideas around in the head", quite the contrary — it is always better to try to concentrate in a centre, the centre of aspiration, one might say, the place where the flame of aspiration burns, to gather in all the energies there, at the solar plexus centre and, if possible, to obtain an attentive silence as though one wanted to listen to something extremely subtle, something that demands a complete attention, a complete concentration and total silence. And then not to move at all. Not to think, not to stir, and make that movement of opening so as to receive all that can be received, but taking good care not to try to know what is happening while it is happening, for if one wants to understand or even to observe actively, it keeps up a sort of cerebral activity which is unfavourable to the fullness of the receptivity — to be silent, as totally silent as possible, in an attentive concentration, and then be still.

If one succeeds in this, then, when everything is over, when

one comes out of meditation, some time later — usually not immediately — from within the being something new emerges in the consciousness: a new understanding, a new appreciation of things, a new attitude in life — in short, a new way of being. This may be fugitive, but at that moment, if one observes it, one finds that something has taken one step forward on the path of understanding or transformation. It may be an illumination, an understanding truer or closer to the truth, or a power of transformation which helps you to achieve a psychological progress or a widening of the consciousness or a greater control over your movements, over the activities of the being.

And these results are never immediate. For if one tries to have them at once, one remains in a state of activity which is quite the contrary of true receptivity. One must be as neutral, as immobile, as passive as one can be, with a background of silent aspiration not formulated in words or ideas or even in feelings; something that does this (*gesture like a mounting flame*) in an ardent vibration, but which does not formulate, and above all, does not try to understand.

With a little practice one reaches a state which may be obtained at will, in a few seconds, that is, one doesn't waste any of the meditation time. Naturally, in the beginning, one must slowly quieten the mind, gather up one's consciousness, concentrate; one loses three-quarters of the time in preparing oneself. But when one has practised the thing, in two or three seconds one can get it, and then one benefits from the whole period of receptivity.

Naturally, there are still more advanced and perfected states, but that comes later. But already if one reaches that state, one profits fully by the meditation.

We are going to try.

(*Meditation*)

12 June 1957

"It is indeed possible even while fasting for very long periods to maintain the full energies and activities of the soul and mind and life, even those of the body, to remain wakeful but concentrated in Yoga all the time, or to think deeply and write day and night, to dispense with sleep, to walk eight hours a day, maintaining all these activities separately or together and not feel any loss of strength, any fatigue, any kind of failure or decadence. At the end of the fast one can even resume at once taking the normal or even a greater than the normal amount of nourishment without any transition or precaution such as medical science enjoins, as if both the complete fasting and the feasting were natural conditions, alternating by an immediate and easy passage from one to the other, of a body already trained by a sort of initial transformation to be an instrument of the powers and activities of Yoga. But one thing one does not escape and that is the wasting of the material tissues of the body, its flesh and substance. Conceivably, if a practicable way and means could only be found, this last invincible obstacle too might be overcome and the body maintained by an interchange of its forces with the forces of material Nature, giving to her her need from the individual and taking from her directly the sustaining energies of her universal existence. Conceivably, one might rediscover and re-establish at the summit of the evolution of life the phenomenon we see at its base, the power to draw from all around it the means of sustenance and self-renewal. Or else the evolved being might acquire the greater power to draw down those means from above rather than draw them up or pull

them in from the environment around, all about it and below it."

The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, Vol. 16, pp. 28–29

The description Sri Aurobindo gives here of the possibility of a prolonged fast while maintaining all activities, is a description of his own experience.

He is not speaking of a possibility but of something he has done. But it would be a great mistake to believe that it is an experience that can be imitated in its outer appearance; and even if one managed to do it by an effort of will, it would be perfectly useless from the spiritual point of view, if the experience has not been preceded by a change of consciousness which would be a preliminary liberation.

It is not by abstaining from food that you can make a spiritual progress. It is by being free, not only from all attachment and all desire and preoccupation with food, but even from all need for it; by being in the state in which all these things are so foreign to your consciousness that they have no place there. Only then, as a spontaneous, natural result, can one usefully stop eating. It could be said that the essential condition is to forget to eat — forget, because all the energies of the being and all its concentration are turned towards a more total, more true inner realisation, towards this *constant*, imperative preoccupation with the union of the whole being, including the bodily cells, with the vibration of the divine forces, with the supramental force which is manifesting, so that this may be the true life: not only the purpose of life, but the essence of life, not only an imperative need of life, but all its joy and all its *raison d'être*.

When that is there, when this realisation is attained, then to eat or not to eat, to sleep or not sleep, all this has no longer any importance. It is an outer rhythm left to the play of the universal forces as a whole, finding expression through the circumstances and people around you; and then the body, united, totally united with the inner truth, has a suppleness, a constant adaptability:

if food is there, it takes it; if it isn't there, it doesn't think about it. And so too with all things.... This is not life! They are modes of existing to which one adapts oneself without giving it any thought. This gives you the feeling of a kind of blossoming, as a flower opens on a plant, a sort of activity which does not come from a concentrated will but is in harmony with all the forces around you, a way of being which is adapted to the circumstances you live in, which have absolutely no importance in themselves.

There comes a moment when, free from everything, one needs practically nothing, and one can use anything, do anything without this having any real influence on the state of consciousness one is in. This is what really matters. To try through outer gestures or arbitrary decisions which come from a mental consciousness aspiring for a higher life can be a means, not a very effective one but still a sort of reminder to the being that it ought to be something other than what it is in its animality — but it's not that, it's not that at all! A person who could be entirely absorbed in his inner aspiration, to the point of not giving any thought or care to these external things, who would take what comes and not think about it when it doesn't, would be infinitely farther on the path than someone who undertakes ascetic practices with the idea that this will lead him to realisation.

The only thing that is truly effective is the change of consciousness; it is the inner liberation through an intimate, constant union, absolute and inevitable, with the vibration of the supramental forces. The preoccupation of every second, the will of all the elements of the being, the aspiration of the entire being, including all the cells of the body, is this union with the supramental forces, the divine forces. And there is no longer any need at all to be preoccupied with what the consequences will be. What has to be in the play of the universal forces and their manifestation will be, quite naturally, spontaneously, automatically, there is no need to be preoccupied with it. The only thing that matters is the constant, total, complete contact — constant,

yes, constant — with the Force, the Light, the Truth, the Power, and that ineffable delight of the supramental consciousness.

That is sincerity. All the rest is an imitation, it is almost a part one plays for oneself.

Perfect purity is *to be*, to be ever more and more, in a self-perfecting becoming. One must never pretend that one *is*: one must *be*, spontaneously.

This is sincerity.

19 June 1957

Sweet Mother, if someone falls seriously ill, is this a purely physical phenomenon or is it a difficulty in his spiritual life?

That depends on the person! If it is someone who is doing yoga, it is quite obviously a difficulty in his spiritual life. If it is somebody who is not at all engaged in yoga and who lives an ordinary life in the most ordinary manner, it is an ordinary accident. It depends absolutely on the person. The outer phenomena may be similar, but the inner causes are absolutely different. No two illnesses are alike, though labels are put on diseases and attempts made to group them; but in fact every person is ill in his own way, and his way depends on what he is, on his state of consciousness and the life he leads.

We have often said that illnesses are always the result of a disturbance of equilibrium, but this disturbance can occur in completely different states of being. For the ordinary man whose consciousness is centred in the physical, outer life, it is a purely physical disturbance of equilibrium, of the functioning of the different organs. But when behind this purely superficial life, an inner life is being fashioned, the causes of illness change; they always become the expression of a disequilibrium between the different parts of the being: between the inner progress or effort and the outer resistances or conditions of one's life, one's body.

Even from the ordinary external point of view, it has been recognised for a very long time that it is a fall in the resistance of the vitality due to immediate moral causes which is always at the origin of an illness. When one is in a normal state of equilibrium and lives in a normal physical harmony, the body has a capacity of resistance, it has within it an atmosphere strong enough to resist illnesses: its most material substance emanates

subtle vibrations which have the strength to resist illnesses, even diseases which are called contagious — in fact, all vibrations are contagious, but still, certain diseases are considered as especially contagious. Well, a man who, even from the purely external point of view, is in a state in which his organs function harmoniously and an adequate psychological balance prevails, has at the same time enough resistance for the contagion not to affect him. But if for some reason or other he loses this equilibrium or is weakened by depression, dissatisfaction, moral difficulties or undue fatigue, for instance, this reduces the normal resistance of the body and he is open to the disease. But if we consider someone who is doing yoga, then it is altogether different, in the sense that the causes of disequilibrium are of a different nature and the illness usually becomes the expression of an inner difficulty which has to be overcome.

So each one should find out for himself why he is ill.

From the ordinary point of view, in most cases, it is usually fear — fear, which may be mental fear, vital fear, but which is almost always physical fear, a fear in the cells — it is fear which opens the door to all contagion. Mental fear — all who have a little control over themselves or any human dignity can eliminate it; vital fear is more subtle and asks for a greater control; as for physical fear, a veritable yoga is necessary to overcome it, for the cells of the body are afraid of everything that is unpleasant, painful, and as soon as there is any unease, even if it is insignificant, the cells of the body become anxious, they don't like to be uncomfortable. And then, to overcome that, the control of a conscious will is necessary. It is usually this kind of fear that opens the door to illnesses. And I am not speaking of the first two types of fear which, as I said, any human being who wants to be human in the noblest sense of the word, must overcome, for that is cowardice. But physical fear is more difficult to overcome; without it even the most violent attacks could be repelled. If one has a minimum of control over the body, one can lessen its effects, but that is not immunity. It is this kind of trembling of material, physical

fear in the cells of the body which aggravates all illnesses.

Some people are spontaneously free from fear even in their body; they have a sufficient vital equilibrium in them not to be afraid, not to fear, and a natural harmony in the rhythm of their physical life which enables them to reduce the illness spontaneously to a minimum. There are others, on the other hand, with whom the thing always becomes as bad as it can be, sometimes to the point of catastrophe. There is the whole range and this can be seen quite easily. Well, this depends on a kind of happy rhythm of the movement of life in them, which is either harmonious enough to resist external attacks of illness or else doesn't exist or is not sufficiently powerful, and is replaced by that trembling of fear, that kind of instinctive anguish which transforms the least unpleasant contact into something painful and harmful. There is the whole range, from someone who can go through the worst contagion and epidemics without ever catching anything to one who falls ill at the slightest chance. So naturally it always depends on the constitution of each person; and as soon as one wants to make an effort for progress, it naturally depends on the control one has acquired over oneself, until the moment when the body becomes the docile instrument of the higher Will and one can obtain from it a normal resistance to all attacks.

But when one can eliminate fear, one is almost in safety. For example, epidemics, or so-called epidemics, like those which are raging at present — ninety-nine times out of a hundred they come from fear: a fear, then, which even becomes a mental fear in its most sordid form, promoted by newspaper articles, useless talk and so on.

Mother, how are medicines to be used for a body which is not altogether unconscious? For even when we draw on the divine grace, we see that we need a little medicine, and if a little medicine is given it has a good effect. Does this mean that only the body needs medicine or is there something wrong with the mind and the vital?

In most cases the use of medicines — within reasonable limits, that is, when one doesn't poison oneself by taking medicines — is simply to help the body to have confidence. It is the body which heals itself. When it wants to be cured, it is cured. And this is something very widely recognised now; even the most traditional doctors tell you, "Yes, our medicines help, but it is not the medicines which cure, it is the body which decides to be cured." Very well, so when the body is told, "Take this", it says to itself, "Now I am going to get better", and because it says "I am going to get better", well, it is cured!

In almost every case, there are things which help — a little — provided it is done within reasonable limits. If it is no longer within reasonable limits, you are sure to break down completely. You cure one thing but catch another which is usually worse. But still, a little help, in a way, a little something that gives confidence to your body: "Now it will be all right, now that I have taken this, it is going to be all right" — this helps it a great deal and it decides to get better and it is cured.

There too, there is a whole range of possibilities, from the yogi who is in so perfect a state of inner control that he could take poison without being poisoned to the one who at the least little scratch rushes to the doctor and needs all sorts of special drugs to get his body to make the movement needed for its cure. There is the whole possible range, from total, supreme mastery to an equally total bondage to all external aids and all that you absorb from outside — a bondage and a perfect liberation. There is the whole range. So everything is possible. It is like a great key-board, very complex and very complete, on which one can play, and the body is the instrument.

Mother, by a mental effort — for instance, the resolution not to take medicines when one is ill — can one succeed in making the body understand?

That is not enough. A mental resolution is not enough, no. There

are subtle reactions in your body which do not obey the mental resolution, it is not enough. Something else is needed.

Other regions must be contacted. A power higher than the mind's is needed.

And from this point of view, all that is in the mind is always subject to inner questioning. You take a resolution but you can be sure that something will always come in which perhaps may not openly fight this resolution but will question its effectiveness. It is enough, you see, to be subject to the least doubt for the resolution to lose half its effect. If at the same time as you say "I want", there is something silently lurking, somewhere behind, in the background, something which asks itself, "What will the result be?" that is enough to ruin everything.

This play of the mind's working is extremely subtle and no ordinary human means can succeed in controlling it perfectly. For instance, this is well known among people who practise yoga and want to control their body: if through an assiduous yogic effort they have succeeded in controlling something in themselves — a particular weakness of the body, an opening to a certain disequilibrium — if they have managed to do this and had some result, for instance the disappearance of this disequilibrium for a very long time, for years, well, if one day at a particular moment, suddenly, the thought crosses their mind that "Ah! Now it is done", the very next minute it returns. That is enough. For it proves that they have come into contact with the vibrations of the thing they had rejected, on a plane where they are vulnerable, the plane of thought, and that for some reason or other in the play of forces, they are open, and it comes back.

This is something very well known in yoga. The simple fact of observing the victory one has gained — observing it mentally, you see, thinking about it — is enough to destroy the effect of the yoga which may have existed for years. A mental silence strong enough to prevent all outer vibrations from coming in, is indispensable. Well, that is something so difficult to achieve that one must really have passed from what Sri Aurobindo

calls "the lower hemisphere" to the higher, exclusively spiritual hemisphere, for it not to happen.

No, it is not in the mental field that the victories are won. It is impossible. It is open to all influences, all contradictory currents. All the mental constructions one makes carry their own contradiction with them. One can try to overrule it or make it as harmless as possible, but it exists, it is there, and at the slightest weakness or lack of vigilance or inadvertance, it enters, and destroys all the work. Mentally, one arrives at very few results, and they are always mixed. Something else is needed. One must pass from the mind into the domain of faith or of a higher consciousness, to be able to act with safety.

It is quite obvious that one of the most powerful means for acting on the body is faith. People who have a simple heart, not a very complicated mind — simple people, you see — who don't have a very great, very complicated mental development but have a very deep faith, have a great power of action over their bodies, very great. That is why one is quite surprised at times: "Here's a man with a great realisation, an exceptional person, and he is a slave of all the smallest physical things, while this man, well, he is so simple and looks so uncouth, but he has a great faith and goes through difficulties and obstacles like a conqueror!"

I don't say that a highly cultured man can't have faith, but it is more difficult, for there is always this mental element which contradicts, discusses, tries to understand, which is difficult to convince, which wants proofs. His faith is less pure. It is necessary, then, to pass on to a higher degree in the evolutionary spiral, pass from the mental to the spiritual; then, naturally, faith takes on a quality of a very high order. But I mean that in daily life, ordinary life, a very simple man who has a very ardent faith can have a mastery over his body — without it being truly a "mastery"; it is simply a spontaneous movement — a control over his body far greater than somebody who has reached a much higher development.

19 June 1957

Mother, I am asking you a small personal question. An incurable illness, an organic disease has been cured by your grace, but a purely functional illness is not. How can that be? In the same body. Is it a lack of receptivity or...?

It is something so personal, so individual, that it is impossible to reply. As I said, for each one the case is absolutely different, and one can't give an explanation for these things without going into the details of the functioning. For each one, the case is different.

And for every thing, every event, there are as many explanations as there are planes of consciousness. In a way... well, in an over-simplified way, one may say that there is a physical explanation, a vital explanation, a mental explanation, a spiritual explanation, there is... There is an entire gradation of countless explanations that you could give for the same phenomenon. None is altogether true, all have an element of truth. And finally, if you want to enter the field of explanations, if you take one thing and follow it up, you always have to explain it by another, and you may go round the world indefinitely and explain one thing by another without ever reaching the end of your explanation.

Indeed, when one sees this in its totality and its essence, the wisest thing one can say is: "It is like that because it is like that."

26 June 1957

"But there is here still the necessity of a resort to the normal means of propagation and the gross method of physical Nature. A purely occult method, a resort to supraphysical processes acting by supraphysical means for a physical result would have to be possible if we are to avoid this necessity: the resort to the sex impulse and its animal process could not be transcended otherwise. If there is some reality in the phenomenon of materialisation and dematerialisation claimed to be possible by occultists and evidenced by occurrences many of us have witnessed,[1] *a method of this kind would not be out of the range of possibility. For in the theory of the occultists and in the gradation of the ranges and planes of our being which Yoga-knowledge outlines for us there is not only a subtle physical force but a subtle physical Matter intervening between life and gross Matter and to create in this subtle physical substance and precipitate the forms thus made into our grosser materiality is feasible. It should be possible and it is believed to be possible*

[1] Sri Aurobindo is probably alluding, among other things, to an incident which took place in 1921 in Pondicherry at the "Guest House" where he lived. A cook who had been dismissed had gone to a local black magician to try to take his revenge, and a shower of stones began to fall into the courtyard of the "Guest House", regularly for several days. The people on the first floor could see the stones forming in front of their eyes and then falling into the courtyard. These stones were so real that they hurt a young servant, and could be picked up. Strangely enough they were all covered with moss. Finally, when larger and larger stones started falling inside closed rooms, and there was no longer any doubt about their occult origin, Mother intervened with her inner power and the "shower" stopped. A few days later the cook's wife came running to ask for Sri Aurobindo's forgiveness: the cook lay dying in the hospital, struck by the "recoil" of his shower of stones. Sri Aurobindo answered, "For this he need not die!" And everything returned to normal. This incident is related in detail in *The Life of Sri Aurobindo* by A. B. Purani, 1964 Ed., pp. 282-83.

for an object formed in this subtle physical substance to make a transit from its subtlety into the state of gross Matter directly by the intervention of an occult force and process whether with or even without the assistance or intervention of some gross material procedure. A soul wishing to enter into a body or form for itself a body and take part in a divine life upon earth might be assisted to do so or even provided with such a form by this method of direct transmutation without passing through birth by the sex process or undergoing any degradation or any of the heavy limitations in the growth and development of its mind and material body inevitable to our present way of existence. It might then assume at once the structure and greater powers and functionings of the truly divine material body which must one day emerge in a progressive evolution to a totally transformed existence both of the life and form in a divinised earth-nature.

The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, Vol. 16, pp. 32–33

Mother, is this method of direct transmutation without passing through birth possible now, since now the Supermind is on earth?

Is it possible? You are asking whether it is possible?... Everything is possible. What do you want to know? Whether this has already been done?

Yes.

Not as far as the most material plane; as far as the perceptible subtle physical — perceptible by the intermediary senses, between the physical senses and those of the subtle physical; for instance, like a breath felt as a gentle breeze, like certain perceptions of smell, like subtle perfumes. Naturally, those who have an inner vision can see, but for the most material senses there

is not — how shall I put it? — not the permanence given by the physical body as we know it materially. There are phenomena, yes, that can even be seen, but they are fleeting. There is no stability, the stability in matter, the *fixity* has not been acquired. I mean there is a contact, there is even the contact of touch, there is a perception, but there isn't the permanence given by the material body. They are transient phenomena which, naturally, don't give you the same feeling of an altogether tangible reality. Still, the influence is constant, the intervention is constant, the perception is constant, but there is not the stability of a body which... well, which, when it goes out of the room and returns, it comes back the same as it went out, you understand? Or when you sit down in a certain place, it occupies that place in a very concrete way.

I cannot say because I don't know everything that has happened and is happening on earth, but as far as I know, this has not yet been achieved, this concrete permanence.

Yet, it was of matter, for there was sight, touch, hearing. But hearing doesn't need to be very material: the sounds of the subtle physical life, its vibrations can be heard very well; and quite strangely, it is hearing and smell which seem to be the most permanent in the subtle physical world, more so than the perception of form — and also a certain sense of contact which is very, very concrete. Only, this heavy material presence of a physical body which occupies an absolutely definite and concrete place and prevents any other thing from occupying the same place, this does not yet seem to be possible; therefore, what has so far been achieved has after all to be a little more fluid than the heaviest kind of matter.

Does this progress depend on the human consciousness?

You mean for a more complete materialisation?... It depends on the power of manipulating the vibrations of matter. This power of manipulation is necessarily the result of a certain state of

consciousness. And all depends on the standpoint that is taken, for no individual progress can come about without what could be called the "authorisation" of the divine Will. Ultimately, nothing in creation can happen without the sanction of the divine Will. So...

Mother, will the first supramental body be like this?

Like what?

A transformation without passing through a terrestrial birth?

Ah! Excuse me, you must not confuse things. There are two things. There is the possibility of a purely supramental creation on one hand, and the possibility of a progressive transformation of a physical body into a supramental body, or rather of a human body into a superhuman body. Then it would be a progressive transformation which could take a certain number of years, probably a considerable number, and would produce a being who would no longer be a "man" in the animal sense of the word, but would not be the supramental being formed fully outside all animality, for its present origin is necessarily an animal one. So, a transmutation may take place, a transformation that's enough to liberate the being from this origin, but all the same it wouldn't be a purely and entirely supramental creation. Sri Aurobindo has said that there will be an intermediary race — a race or perhaps some individuals, we don't know — an intermediary rung which could serve as a passage or could be perpetuated according to the needs and necessities of creation. But if one starts from a body formed in the same way as human bodies are at present, the result will never be the same as a being formed entirely according to the supramental method and process. It will perhaps be more on the superhuman side in the sense that all animal expression may disappear, but it won't

be able to have the absolute perfection of a body that's purely supramental in its formation.

And in this transformed human body will there be a differentiation between man and woman?

What, what are you saying?

If the Supermind accepts this transformed body...

Accepts? What do you mean, "accepts"?

I mean "descends" in this half-human body — will there be a differentiation?

But it is not like that, it is not a bottle into which one pours some liquid! It's not that!

Are you asking whether the body will keep its masculine or feminine form? Probably this will be left to the choice of the being who enters the house, the occupant.... Does it interest you very much, this difference? (*Laughter*)

You tell us that there won't be any difference, but so far there is still a great difference.

From what point of view? If it is the physical appearance, I agree — and yet, not so much as all that, but still... From what point of view?

From the point of view of the idea of sex, that there are two different sexes. That still exists.

The idea! But that's the fault of the person who thinks! One can very well dispense with thinking. You know, these very petty limits of thought are things which ought to disappear before you

can even attempt to transform your body. If you still have these very petty ideas which are purely animal, there is not much hope that you could begin the least process for the transformation of your body. You must first transform your thought.... For that is something which is still crawling far down below. If you are not able to feel that a conscious and living being can be quite free, even in a certain definite form, from all feeling of sex, it... it means that you are still up to your neck in the original animality.

In the inner thought one feels it, but in the actuality of material life...

What about the actuality?

In the outer life I haven't yet realised that. In the inner...

You spend your time thinking about it?

But one may live twenty-four hours out of twenty-four without giving a single thought to this difference! You must really be hypnotised by this affair. Do you suppose that when I speak to you I think that you are a man and when I speak to Tara I think she is a woman?

Still there is a difference!

Ah! but it is not at all necessary.

In theory I understand.

In theory! What theory?

That there is no difference. But when I am in contact with someone, either I am speaking to a man or a woman.

Well, it's a great pity both for you and for the other person.

No, it is just the very opposite of what ought to happen! When you are in contact with someone and speaking with him, it is precisely to what surpasses all animality that you should speak; it is to the soul you must speak, never to the body. Even more is asked of you, for you are asked to address the Divine — not even the soul — the one Divine in every being, and to be conscious of that.

But if only one person is conscious and the other is a brute, what will happen?

If you alone are conscious? And what do you know about it? And how and on what plane do you judge that the other is not conscious?

His way of replying.

But perhaps he thinks the same of you!

Well, I tell you that so long as it is not the divine Presence you address when you speak to someone, it means you are not conscious of it in yourself. And then it's terribly presumptuous to judge what state the other person is in. What do you know about it? If you yourself are not conscious of the Divine in the other being, what right have you to say whether he is conscious of it or not? On what basis? Your small outer intelligence? But it knows nothing! It is quite incapable of perceiving anything whatever.

Unless your vision is *constantly* the vision of the Divine in all things, you have not only no right but no capacity to judge the state which others are in. And to pronounce a judgment on someone without having this vision spontaneously, effortlessly, is precisely an example of the mental presumptuousness of which Sri Aurobindo always spoke.... And it so happens that one who has the vision, the consciousness, who is capable of seeing the truth in all things, never feels the need to judge anything

whatever. For he understands everything and knows everything. Therefore, once and for all, you must tell yourselves that the moment you begin to judge things, people, circumstances, you are in the most total human ignorance.

In short, one could put it like this: when one understands, one no longer judges and when one judges, it means that one doesn't know.

Judging people is one of the first things which must be totally swept away from the consciousness before you can take even a step on the supramental path, because that is not a material progress or a bodily progress, it is only a very little progress of thought, mental progress. And unless you have swept your mind clean of all its ignorance, you cannot hope to take a step on the supramental path.

In fact, you have said something terrible. When you said, "I cannot speak to his soul if he is a brute", well, you have given yourself away... you have stuck a label on yourself. There you are.

All those who have truly and sincerely had the experience of the divine Presence, all those who have truly been in contact with the Divine, have always said the same thing: that sometimes, even often, it is in what is most decried by men, most despised by men, most condemned by human "wisdom", that one can see the divine light shining.

They are not mere words, they are living experiences.

All these ideas of good and evil, good and bad, higher, lower, all these notions belong to the ignorance of the human mind, and if one really wants to come into contact with the divine life, one must liberate oneself totally from this ignorance, one must rise to a region of consciousness where these things have *no* reality. The feeling of superiority and inferiority completely disappears, it is replaced by something else which is of a very different nature — a sort of capacity for filtering appearances, penetrating behind masks, shifting the point of view.

And these are not words, it is altogether true that *every-*

thing changes its appearance, totally, that life and things are completely different from what they appear to be.

All this contact, this ordinary perception of the world loses its reality completely. This is what appears unreal, fantastic, illusory, non-existent. There is something — something very material, very concrete, very physical — which becomes the reality of the being, and which has nothing in common with the ordinary way of seeing. When one has this perception — the perception of the work of the divine force, of the movement being worked out behind the appearance, *in* the appearance, through the appearance — one begins to be ready to live something truer than the ordinary human falsehood. But not before.

There is no compromise, you see. It is not like a convalescence after an illness: you must change worlds. So long as your mind is real for you, your way of thinking something true for you, real, concrete, it proves that you are not there yet. You must first pass through to the other side. Afterwards you will be able to understand what I am telling you.

Pass through to the other side.

It is not true that one can understand little by little, it is not like that. This kind of progress is different. What is more true is that one is shut up in a shell, and inside it something is happening, like the chick in the egg. It is getting ready in there. It is in there. One doesn't see it. Something is happening in the shell, but outside one sees nothing. And it is only when all is ready that there comes the capacity to pierce the shell and to be born into the light of day.

It is not that one becomes more and more perceptible or visible: one is shut in — shut in — and for sensitive people there is even that terrible sensation of being compressed, of trying to pass through and then coming up against a wall. And then one knocks and knocks and knocks, and one can't go through.

And so long as one is there, inside, one is in the falsehood. And only on the day when by the Divine Grace one can break the shell and come out into the Light, is one free.

This may happen suddenly, spontaneously, quite unexpectedly.

I don't think one can go through gradually. I don't think it is something which slowly wears and wears away until one can see through it. I haven't had an instance of this so far. There is rather a kind of accumulation of power inside, an intensification of the need, and an endurance in the effort which becomes free from all fear, all anxiety, all calculation; a need so imperative that one no longer cares for the consequences.

One is like an explosive that nothing can resist, and one bursts out from one's prison in a blaze of light.

After that one can no longer fall back again.

It is truly a new birth.

3 July 1957

I have been asked if we are doing a collective yoga and what the conditions for the collective yoga are.

I might tell you first of all that to do a collective yoga we must be a collectivity (!) and then speak to you about the different conditions required for being a collectivity. But last night (*smiling*) I had a symbolic vision of our collectivity.

I had this vision in the early part of the night, and it made me wake up with a rather unpleasant impression. Then I went back to sleep and had forgotten it, and just now when I thought of the question I have been asked, the vision suddenly came back. It returned with a great intensity and so imperatively that now when I wanted to tell you exactly what kind of a collectivity we want to realise in accordance with the ideal Sri Aurobindo has given in the last chapter of *The Life Divine* — a supramental, gnostic collectivity, the only one which can practise Sri Aurobindo's integral yoga and be physically realised in a progressive collective body that grows more and more divine — the memory of this vision became so imperative that it prevented me from speaking.

Its symbol was very clear though of quite a familiar kind, so to speak, but so unmistakably realistic in its familiarity.... If I were to relate it to you in detail, probably you wouldn't even be able to follow; it was very complicated. It was the image of a kind of — how to put it? — of an immense hotel in which all earthly possibilities were accommodated in different rooms. And all this was in a state of constant transformation: fragments or entire wings of the building were suddenly demolished and rebuilt while all the people were still staying in them, in such a way that if a person went somewhere even inside this huge hotel, he ran the risk of not finding his room again when he wanted to get back to it! For it had been demolished and was being rebuilt

on another plan. There was order, organisation... and there was the fantastic chaos I have described, and in that there was a symbol. There was a symbol which certainly applies to what Sri Aurobindo writes here[1] on the necessity of the transformation of the body, what kind of transformation should take place for life to become a divine life.

It was somewhat like this: somewhere in the centre of this huge building, a room was reserved — in the story, as it seemed, it was reserved for a mother and her daughter. The mother was a very old lady, a self-important matron with much authority and her own views on the whole organisation. The daughter had a sort of power of movement and activity which made it possible for her to be everywhere at once even while remaining in that room which was... well, a little more than a room; it was a sort of apartment, and its main feature was to be right in the centre. But she was in constant argument with her mother. The mother wanted to keep things as they were with the rhythm they had, that is, with precisely that habit of demolishing one thing to build another out of it, and then again demolishing another to rebuild another one — which gave the building an appearance of frightful confusion. And the daughter didn't like that and had another plan. She wanted above all to bring something quite new into this organisation, a sort of super-organisation which would make all this confusion unnecessary. Finally, as it was impossible to come to an understanding, she had left the room to go on a sort of round of inspection.... She went her round, saw everything, then she wanted to go back to her own room — for it was her room as well — to take some decisive action. And it was then that something rather peculiar began to happen. She remembered quite well where her room was, but each time she set out to go there by one route either the stairs disappeared or things were so changed that she could no longer recognise her way! And so she went here and there, climbed up and down,

[1] *The Supramental Manifestation*, SABCL, Vol. 16, pp. 33–36.

searched, went in and out... impossible to find the way back to her room! As all this was taking a physical appearance, which was, as I said, very familiar and very ordinary, as always in these symbolic visions, somewhere there was — how to put it? — the administration of this hotel, and a woman who was a kind of manager, who had all the keys and knew where everybody was staying. So the daughter went to this person and asked, "Can you show me the way to my room?" — "Oh, yes, certainly, it is very easy." All the people around looked at her as though saying, "How can you say that?" But she got up and, with authority, asked for a key, the key of the room, and said, "I'll take you there." Then she took all sorts of routes, but all so complicated, so bizarre! And the daughter followed her very attentively so as not to lose sight of her. And just at the moment when obviously they should have reached the place where this so-called room was, suddenly the manager — we shall call her the manager — the manager with her key... disappeared! And this feeling of disappearance was so acute that... everything disappeared at the same time.

If... To help you to understand this riddle, I could tell you that the mother is physical Nature as it is and the daughter is the new creation. The manager is the mental consciousness, organiser of the world as Nature has made it until now, that is, the highest sense of organisation manifested in material Nature as it is now. This is the key to the vision. Naturally, when I woke up I knew immediately what could solve this problem which had seemed absolutely insoluble. The disappearance of the manager and her key was a clear indication that she was quite incapable of leading to its true place what could be called the creative consciousness of the new world.

I knew it but I didn't have the vision of the solution, which means that this is something which is yet to be manifested; this was not yet manifested in that building — that fantastic structure — and this is precisely the mode of consciousness which would transform this incoherent creation into something real, truly

conceived, willed, executed, with a centre which is in its true place, a recognised place, with a *real* effective power.

(*Silence*)

It is quite clear in its symbolism, in the sense that all possibilities are there, all activities are there, but in disorder and confusion. They are neither coordinated nor centralised nor unified around the single central truth and consciousness and will. And we come back, then, to... precisely this question of a collective yoga and the collectivity which will be able to realise it. And what should this collectivity be?

It is certainly not an arbitrary structure like those made by men, in which they put everything pell-mell, without order or reality, and the whole thing is held together only by illusory links, which were symbolised here by the walls of the hotel, and which, in fact, in ordinary human constructions — if we take as an example a religious community — are symbolised by the monastery building, identical clothes, identical activities, even identical movements — I'll make it more clear: everybody wears the same uniform, everybody rises at the same hour, eats the same things, offers the same prayers together, etc., there is a general uniformity. And naturally, inside, there is a chaos of consciousnesses, each one going according to its own mode, for this uniformity which goes as far as an identity of belief and dogma, is an altogether illusory identity.

This is one of the most usual types of human collectivity: to be grouped, linked, united around a common ideal, a common action, a common realisation, but in a completely artificial way. As opposed to this, Sri Aurobindo tells us that a true community — what he calls a gnostic or supramental community — can exist only on the basis of the inner realisation of each of its members, each one realising his real, concrete unity and identity with all the other members of the community, that is, each one should feel not like just one member united in some way with all

the others, but all as one, within himself. For each one the others must be himself as much as his own body, and not mentally and artificially, but by a fact of consciousness, by an inner realisation.

(*Silence*)

That means that before hoping to realise this gnostic collectivity, each one should first become — or at least begin to become — a gnostic being. This is obvious; the individual work should go on ahead and the collective work should follow; but it so happens that spontaneously, without any arbitrary intervention of the will, the individual progress is controlled, so to speak, or held back by the collective state. Between the individual and the collectivity there is an interdependence from which one can't totally free oneself, granting that one tries. And even a person who tried in his yoga to liberate himself totally from the terrestrial and human state of consciousness, would be tied down, in his subconscious at least, to the state of the mass, which acts as a brake and actually *pulls* backwards. One can try to go much faster, try to drop all the weight of attachments and responsibilities, but despite everything, the realisation, even of one who is at the very summit and is the very first in the evolutionary march, is dependent on the realisation of the whole, dependent on the state of the terrestrial collectivity. And that indeed *pulls* one back, to such an extent that at times one must wait for centuries for the Earth to be ready, in order to be able to realise what is to be realised.

And that is why Sri Aurobindo also says, somewhere else, that a double movement is necessary, and that the effort for individual progress and realisation should be combined with an effort to try to uplift the whole mass and enable it to make the progress that's indispensable for the greater progress of the individual: a mass-progress, it could be called, which would allow the individual to take one more step forward.

And now, I shall tell you that this is why I thought it would

be useful to have some group meditations, in order to work on the creation of a common atmosphere that's a little more organised than... my big hotel of last night!

So, the best use one can make of these meditations — which are gradually becoming more frequent since now we are also going to replace the "distributions" by short meditations — is to go within, into the depths of one's being, as far as one can go, and find the place where one can feel, perceive and perhaps even create an atmosphere of unity in which a force for order and organisation will be able to put each element in its place and make a new coordinated world arise out of the present chaos. That's all.

9 July 1957

This brief talk was given to the children as an exception on a Tuesday before the meditation.

We said that we were going to prepare ourselves methodically for the sadhana.... There is one point on which I have already insisted strongly, but unfortunately without much result among you all. And I thought that perhaps it would be good to begin with that to prepare you for a future sadhana.

So, the subject of our meditation this evening will be this: "On the harm done by incontinence of speech."

Very often I have told you that every word spoken uselessly is dangerous chatter. But here, the situation has reached the very limit — there are things which have been said, said over and over again, repeated by all those who have tried to perfect humanity, unfortunately without much result — it is a question of malicious gossip... of slander, of that pleasure taken in speaking ill of others. Anyone who indulges in this kind of incontinence debases his consciousness, and when to this incontinence is added the habit of vulgar quarrelling, expressed in coarse language, then that amounts to suicide, spiritual suicide within oneself.

I stress this point and insist that you take it *very* seriously.

(*Meditation*)

10 July 1957

"It may well be that the evolutionary urge would proceed to a change of the organs themselves in their material working and use and diminish greatly the need of their instrumentation and even of their existence. The centres in the subtle body, sūkṣma śarīra, *of which one would become conscious and aware of all going on in it would pour their energies into material nerve and plexus and tissue and radiate them through the whole material body; all the physical life and its necessary activities in this new existence could be maintained and operated by these higher agencies in a freer and ampler way and by a less burdensome and restricting method. This might go so far that these organs might cease to be indispensable and even be felt as too obstructive: the central force might use them less and less and finally throw aside their use altogether. If that happened they might waste by atrophy, be reduced to an insignificant minimum or even disappear. The central force might substitute for them subtle organs of a very different character or, if anything material was needed, instruments that would be forms of dynamism or plastic transmitters rather than what we know as organs. This might well be part of a supreme total transformation of the body, though this too might not be final. To envisage such changes is to look far ahead and minds attached to the present form of things may be unable to give credence to their possibility. No such limits and no such impossibility of any necessary change can be imposed on the evolutionary urge.... What has to be overpassed, whatever has no longer a use or is degraded, what has become unhelpful or retarding, can be discarded and dropped on the way.*

> *That has been evident in the history of the evolution of the body from its beginning in elementary forms to its most developed type, the human, there is no reason why this process should not intervene in the transition from the human into the divine body. For the manifestation or building of a divine body on earth there must be an initial transformation, the appearance of a new, a greater and more developed type, not a continuance with little modifications of the present physical form and its limited possibilities."*
>
> *The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, Vol. 16, pp. 38–39*

It is quite difficult to free oneself from old habits of being and to be able to freely conceive of a new life, a new world. And naturally, the liberation begins on the highest planes of consciousness: it is easier for the mind or the higher intelligence to conceive of new things than for the vital being, for instance, to feel things in a new way. And it is still more difficult for the body to have a purely material perception of what a new world will be. Yet this perception must *precede* the material transformation; first one must *feel* very concretely the strangeness of the old things, their lack of relevance, if I may say so. One must have the feeling, even a material impression, that they are outdated, that they belong to a past which no longer has any purpose. For the old impressions one had of past things which have become historic — which have their interest from that point of view and support the advance of the present and the future — this is still a movement that belongs to the old world: it is the old world that is unfolding with a past, a present, a future. But for the creation of a new world, there is, so to speak, only a continuity of transition which gives an appearance — an impression rather — the impression of two things still intermingled but almost disconnected, and that the things of the past no longer have the power or the strength to endure, with whatever modifications, in the new things. That other world is necessarily an *absolutely*

new experience. One would have to go back to the time when there was a transition from the animal to the human creation to find a similar period, and at that time the consciousness was not sufficiently mentalised to be able to observe, understand, feel intelligently — the passage must have been made in a completely obscure way. So, what I am speaking about is absolutely new, *unique* in the terrestrial creation, it is something unprecedented, truly a perception or a sensation or an impression... that is quite strange and new. (*After a silence*) A disconnection: something which has overstayed its time and has only quite a subordinate force of existence, from something totally new, but still so young, so imperceptible, almost weak, so to say; it hasn't yet the power to impose and assert itself and to predominate, to take the place of the other. So there is a concomitance but, as I said, with a disconnection, that is, the connection between the two is missing.

It is difficult to describe, but I am speaking to you about it because this is what I felt yesterday evening. I felt it so acutely... that it made me look at certain things, and once I had seen them I felt it would be interesting to tell you about them.

(*Silence*)

It seems strange that something so new, so special and I might say so unexpected should happen during a film-show.[1] For people who believe that some things are important and other things are not, that there are activities which are helpful to yoga and others which are not, well, this is one more opportunity to show that they are wrong. I have always noticed that it is unexpected things which give you the most interesting experiences.

Yesterday evening, suddenly something happened which I

[1] A Bengali film, *Rani Rasmani*, which describes the lives of Sri Ramakrishna and Rani Rasmani, a rich, very intelligent and religious Bengali widow, who in 1847 built the temple of Kali at Dakshineshwar (Bengal) where Sri Ramakrishna lived and worshipped Kali.

have just described to you as best I could — I don't know if I have succeeded in making myself understood — but it was truly quite new and altogether unexpected. We were shown, comparatively clumsily, a picture of the temple on the banks of the Ganges, and the statue of Kali — for I suppose it was a photograph of that statue, I could not manage to get any precise information about it — and while I was seeing that, which was a completely superficial appearance and, as I said, rather clumsy, I saw the reality it was trying to represent, what was behind, and this put me in touch with all that world of religion and worship, of aspiration, man's whole relationship with the gods, which was — I am already speaking in the past tense — which was the flower of the human spiritual effort towards something more divine than man, something which was the highest and almost the purest expression of his effort towards what is higher than he. And suddenly I had *concretely, materially*, the impression that it was another world, a world that had ceased to be real, living, an outdated world which had lost its reality, its truth, which had been transcended, surpassed by something which had taken birth and was only beginning to express itself, but whose *life* was *so intense*, so true, so sublime, that all this became false, unreal, worthless.

Then I truly understood — for I understood not with the head, the intelligence but with the body, you understand what I mean — I understood in the cells of the body — that a new world *is born* and is beginning to grow.

And so, when I saw all this, I remembered something that had happened.... I think I remember rightly, in 1926.[2]

Sri Aurobindo had given me charge of the outer work because he wanted to withdraw into concentration in order to hasten the manifestation of the supramental consciousness and he had announced to the few people who were there that he

[2] On 24 November 1926 Sri Aurobindo withdrew into seclusion and Mother assumed charge of the running of the Ashram.

was entrusting to me the work of helping and guiding them, that I would remain in contact with him, naturally, and that through me he would do the work. Suddenly, immediately, things took a certain shape: a very brilliant creation was worked out in extraordinary detail, with marvellous experiences, contacts with divine beings, and all kinds of manifestations which are considered miraculous. Experiences followed one upon another, and, well, things were unfolding altogether brilliantly and... I must say, in an extremely interesting way.

One day, I went as usual to relate to Sri Aurobindo what had been happening — we had come to something really very interesting, and perhaps I showed a little enthusiasm in my account of what had taken place — then Sri Aurobindo looked at me... and said: "Yes, this is an Overmind creation. It is very interesting, very well done. You will perform miracles which will make you famous throughout the world, you will be able to turn all events on earth topsy-turvy, indeed,..." and then he smiled and said: "It will be a *great* success. But it is an Overmind creation. And it is not success that we want; we want to establish the Supermind on earth. One must know how to renounce immediate success in order to create the new world, the supramental world in its integrality."

With my inner consciousness I understood immediately: a few hours later the creation was gone... and from that moment we started anew on other bases.

Well, I announced to you all that this new world was born. But it has been so engulfed, as it were, in the old world that so far the difference has not been very perceptible to many people. Still, the action of the new forces has continued very regularly, very persistently, very steadily, and to a certain extent, very effectively. And one of the manifestations of this action was my experience — truly so very new — of yesterday evening. And the result of all this I have noted step by step in almost daily experiences. It could be expressed succinctly, in a rather linear way:

First, it is not only a "new conception" of spiritual life

and the divine Reality. This conception was expressed by Sri Aurobindo, I have expressed it myself many a time, and it could be formulated somewhat like this: the old spirituality was an escape from life into the divine Reality, leaving the world just where it was, as it was; whereas our new vision, on the contrary, is a divinisation of life, a transformation of the material world into a divine world. This has been said, repeated, more or less understood, indeed it is the basic idea of what we want to do. But this could be a continuation with an improvement, a widening of the old world as it was — and so long as this is a conception up there in the field of thought, in fact it is hardly more than that — but what has happened, the really new thing, is that a new world is *born, born, born.* It is not the old one transforming itself, it is a *new* world which is *born.* And we are right in the midst of this period of transition where the two are entangled — where the other still persists all-powerful and entirely dominating the ordinary consciousness, but where the new one is quietly slipping in, still very modest, unnoticed — unnoticed to the extent that outwardly it doesn't disturb anything very much, for the time being, and that in the consciousness of most people it is even altogether imperceptible. And yet it is working, growing — until it is strong enough to assert itself visibly.

In any case, to simplify things, it could be said that characteristically the old world, the creation of what Sri Aurobindo calls the Overmind, was an age of the gods, and consequently the age of religions. As I said, the flower of human effort towards what is above it gave rise to innumerable religious forms, to a religious relationship between the best souls and the invisible world. And at the very summit of all that, as an effort towards a higher realisation there has arisen the idea of the unity of religions, of this "one single thing" which is behind all these manifestations; and this idea has truly been, so to speak, the extreme limit of human aspiration. Well, that is at the frontier, it is something that still belongs *completely* to the Overmind world, the Overmind creation and which from there seems to

be looking towards this "other thing" which is a new creation it cannot grasp — which it tries to reach, feels coming, but cannot grasp. To grasp it, a reversal is needed. It is necessary to leave the Overmind creation. It was necessary that the new creation, the supramental creation should take place.

And now, all these old things seem so old, so out-of-date, so arbitrary — such a travesty of the real truth.

In the supramental creation there will *no longer be any religions*. The whole life will be the expression, the flowering into forms of the divine Unity manifesting in the world. And there will no longer be what men now call gods.

These great divine beings themselves will be able to participate in the new creation; but to do so, they will have to put on what we could call the "supramental substance" on earth. And if some of them choose to remain in their world as they are, if they decide not to manifest physically, their relation with the beings of a supramental earth will be a relation of friends, collaborators, equals, for the highest divine essence will be manifested in the beings of the new supramental world on earth.

When the physical substance is supramentalised, to incarnate on earth will no longer be a cause of inferiority, quite the contrary. It will give a plenitude which cannot be obtained otherwise.

But all this is in the future; it is a future... which has *begun*, but which will take some time to be realised integrally. Meanwhile we are in a very special situation, extremely special, without precedent. We are now witnessing the birth of a new world; it is very young, very weak — not in its essence but in its outer manifestation — not yet recognised, not even felt, denied by the majority. But it is here. It is here, making an effort to grow, absolutely *sure* of the result. But the road to it is a completely new road which has never before been traced out — nobody has gone there, nobody has done that! It is a beginning, a *universal beginning*. So, it is an absolutely unexpected and unpredictable adventure.

There are people who love adventure. It is these I call, and I tell them this: "I invite you to the great adventure."

It is not a question of repeating spiritually what others have done before us, for our adventure begins beyond that. It is a question of a new creation, entirely new, with all the unforeseen events, the risks, the hazards it entails — a *real adventure*, whose goal is certain victory, but the road to which is unknown and must be traced out step by step in the unexplored. Something that has never been in this present universe and that will *never* be again in the same way. If that interests you... well, let us embark. What will happen to you tomorrow — I have no idea.

One must put aside all that has been foreseen, all that has been devised, all that has been constructed, and then... set off walking into the unknown. And — come what may! There.

17 July 1957

Has no one any questions on the text?... I have nothing special to tell you this evening, and if you are not curious to know what the new perfections of the body could be...

> *Mother, in the physical education we practise here our aim is a greater and greater control over the body, isn't it? So, as Sri Aurobindo has said in what we read last time, that the Hatha-yoga and Tantric methods give a very great control over the body,*[1] *why don't we introduce these methods into our system?*

These are occult processes for acting on the body — the Tantric ones, at any rate — while the modern methods of development follow the ordinary physical process to give the body all the

[1] "Something there is in us or something has to be developed, perhaps a central and still occult part of our being containing forces whose powers in our actual and present make-up are only a fraction of what could be, but if they became complete and dominant would be truly able to bring about with the help of the light and force of the soul and the supramental truth-consciousness the necessary physical transformation and its consequences. This might be found in the system of Chakras revealed by Tantric knowledge and accepted in the systems of Yoga, conscious centres and sources of all the dynamic powers of our being organising their action through the plexuses and arranged in an ascending series from the lowest physical to the highest mind centre and spiritual centre called the thousand-petalled lotus where ascending Nature, the Serpent Power of the Tantrics, meets the Brahman and is liberated into the Divine Being. These centres are closed or half closed within us and have to be opened before their full potentiality can be manifested in our physical nature: but once they are opened and completely active, no limit can easily be set to the development of their potencies and the total transformation to be possible.... But even these changes would still leave a residue of material processes keeping the old way and not amenable to the higher control and, if this could not be changed, the rest of the transformation might itself be checked and incomplete. A total transformation of the body would demand a sufficient change of the most material part of the organism, its constitution, its processes and its set-up of nature."

The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, Vol, 16, pp. 34 – 35

perfection it is capable of in its present state.... I don't quite grasp your question. The processes are completely different.

The basis of all these methods is the power exercised by the conscious will over matter. Usually it is a method which someone has used fairly successfully and set up as a principle of action, which he has taught to others who in turn have continued and perfected it until it has taken a somewhat fixed form of one kind of discipline or another. But the whole basis is the action of the conscious will on the body. The exact form of the method is not of primary importance. In various countries, at various times, one method or another has been used, but always behind it there is a canalised mental power which acts methodically. Of course, some methods try to use a higher power which would in its turn transmit its capacity to the mental power: if a power of a higher order is infused into the mental method, this method naturally becomes more effective and powerful. But essentially all these disciplines depend above all on the person who practises them and the way he uses them. One can, even in the most material, ordinary processes, make use of this altogether external basis to infuse into them powers of a higher order. And all methods, whatever they may be, depend almost exclusively on the person who uses them, on what he puts into them.

You see, if the matter is considered in its most modern, most external form, how is it that the movements we make almost constantly in our everyday life, or which we have to make in our work if it is a physical work, do not help or help very little, almost negligibly, to develop the muscles and to create harmony in the body? These same movements, on the other hand, if they are made consciously, deliberately, with a definite aim, suddenly start helping you to form your muscles and build up your body. There are jobs, for instance, where people have to carry extremely heavy loads, like bags of cement or sacks of corn or coal, and they make a considerable effort; to a certain extent they do it with an acquired facility, but that doesn't give them harmony of the body, because they don't do it with the *idea* of

developing their muscles, they do it just "like that". And someone who follows a method, either one he has learnt or one he has worked out for himself, and who makes these very movements with the will to develop this muscle or that, to create a general harmony in his body — he succeeds. Therefore, in the conscious will, there is something which adds considerably to the movement itself. Those who really want to practise physical culture as it is conceived now, everything they do, they do consciously. They walk downstairs consciously, they make the movements of ordinary life consciously, not mechanically. An attentive eye will perhaps notice a little difference but the greatest difference lies in the will they put into it, the consciousness they put into it. Walking to go somewhere and walking as an exercise is not the same thing. It is the conscious will in all these things which is important, it is that which brings about the progress and obtains the result. Therefore, what I mean is that the method one uses has only a relative importance in itself; it is the will to obtain a certain result that is important.

The yogi or aspiring yogi who does *asanas* to obtain a spiritual result or even simply a control over his body, obtains these results because it is with this aim that he does them, whereas I know some people who do exactly the same things but for all sorts of reasons unrelated to spiritual development, and who haven't even managed to acquire good health by it! And yet they do exactly the same thing, sometimes they even do it much better than the yogi, but it doesn't give them a stable health... because they haven't thought about it, haven't done it with this purpose in mind. I have asked them myself, I said, "But how can you be ill after doing all that?" — "Oh! but I never thought of it, that's not why I do it." This amounts to saying that it is the conscious will which acts on matter, not the material fact.

But you only have to try it, you will understand very well what I mean. For instance, all the movements you make when dressing, taking your bath, tidying your room... no matter what; make them consciously, with the will that this muscle should

work, that muscle should work. You will see, you will obtain really amazing results.

Going up and down the stairs — you cannot imagine how useful that can be from the point of view of physical culture, if you know how to make use of it. Instead of going up because you are going up and coming down because you are coming down, like any ordinary man, you go up with the consciousness of all the muscles which are working and of making them work harmoniously. You will see. Just try a little, you will see! This means that you can use all the movements of your life for a harmonious development of your body.

You bend down to pick something up, you stretch up to find something right at the top of a cupboard, you open a door, you close it, you have to go round an obstacle, there are a hundred and one things you do constantly and which you can make use of for your physical culture and which will demonstrate to you that it is the consciousness you put into it which produces the effect, a hundred times more than just the material fact of doing it. So, you choose the method you like best, but you can use the whole of your daily life in this way.... To think constantly of the harmony of the body, of the beauty of the movements, of not doing anything that is ungraceful and awkward. You can obtain a rhythm of movement and gesture which is very exceptional.

We are going to meditate on all this.

24 July 1957

"In fact, a supermind is already here but it is involved, concealed behind this manifest mind, life and Matter and not yet acting overtly or in its own power: if it acts, it is through these inferior powers and modified by their characters and so not yet recognisable. It is only by the approach and arrival of the descending Supermind that it can be liberated upon earth and reveal itself in the action of our material, vital and mental parts so that these lower powers can become portions of a total divinised activity of our whole being: it is that that will bring to us a completely realised divinity or the divine life. It is indeed so that life and mind involved in Matter have realised themselves here; for only what is involved can evolve, otherwise there could be no emergence."

The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, Vol. 16, p. 43

Sweet Mother, what is the involved supermind?

It is the same as the uninvolved one! It is the same thing when Sri Aurobindo says that if the Divine were not at the centre of everything, He could never manifest in the world; it is the same thing when he says that essentially, in its origin and deepest structure, the creation is divine, the world is divine; and that is why this divinity will be able to manifest one day, become tangible, express itself fully in place of all that veils and deforms it at present. Up to now, all that has manifested of this divinity is the world as we know it; but the manifestation is boundless, and after this mental world as we know it, of which the apex and prototype is man, another reality will manifest, which Sri Aurobindo calls the Supermind, for it is in fact the next step after the mind; so, seen from the world as it is, it will naturally

be "supramental", that is, something above the mind. And he also says that it will truly be the changing of one world into another, for so far the whole creation belonged to what he calls "the lower hemisphere" as we know it, which is governed by Ignorance and based upon the Inconscient, whereas the other one will be a complete reversal, the sudden appearance of something which will belong to quite a different world, and which instead of being based on Ignorance will be based upon Truth. That is why it will truly be a new world. But if the *essence*, the principle of this world were not included in the world as we knew it, there would be no hope of the one being transformed into the other; they would be two worlds so totally different and opposed that there would be no contact between them and that necessarily, as soon as one came out of this world and emerged into the world of Truth, Light and Knowledge, one would become, so to speak, imperceptible, non-existent for a world belonging exclusively to the Ignorance and the Inconscience.

How is it that even when this change has taken place, there will be a connection and this new world will be able to act upon the old one? It is that in its essence and principle the new is already enclosed, involved in the old world. So, in fact, it is there, inside, in its very depths, hidden, invisible, imperceptible, unexpressed, but it is there, in its essence. Still, unless from the supreme heights the supramental consciousness and force and light manifest directly in the world, as it happened a year and a half ago, this Supermind which in *principle* is at the very bedrock of the material world as it is, would never have any possibility of manifesting itself. Its awakening and appearance below will be the response to a touch from above which will bring out the corresponding element hidden in the depths of matter as it is now.... And this is precisely what is happening at present. But as I told you two weeks ago, this material world as it actually, visibly is, is so powerful, so absolutely real for the ordinary consciousness, that it has engulfed, as it were, this supramental force and consciousness when it manifested, and

a long preparation is necessary before its presence can be even glimpsed, felt, perceived in some way or other. And this is the work it is doing now.

How long it will take is difficult to foresee. It will depend a great deal on the goodwill and the receptivity of a certain number of people, for the individual always advances faster than the collectivity, and by its very nature, humanity is destined to manifest the Supermind before the rest of creation.

At the basis of this collaboration there is necessarily the will to change, no longer to be what one is, for things to be no longer what they are. There are several ways of reaching it, and all the methods are good when they succeed! One may be deeply disgusted with what exists and wish ardently to come out of all this and attain something else; one may — and this is a more positive way — one may feel within oneself the touch, the approach of something positively beautiful and true, and willingly drop all the rest so that nothing may burden the journey to this new beauty and truth.

What is indispensable in every case is the *ardent* will for progress, the willing and joyful renunciation of all that hampers the advance: to throw far away from oneself all that prevents one from going forward, and to set out into the unknown with the ardent faith that this is the truth of tomorrow, *inevitable*, which must necessarily come, which nothing, nobody, no bad will, even that of Nature, can prevent from becoming a reality — perhaps of a not too distant future — a reality which is being worked out now and which those who know how to change, how not to be weighed down by old habits, will *surely* have the good fortune not only to see but to realise.

People sleep, they forget, they take life easy — they forget, forget all the time.... But if we could remember... that we are at an exceptional hour, a *unique* time, that we have this immense good fortune, this invaluable privilege of being present at the birth of a new world, we could easily get rid of everything that impedes and hinders our progress.

So, the most important thing, it seems, is to remember this fact; even when one doesn't have the tangible experience, to have the certainty of it and faith in it; to remember always, to recall it constantly, to go to sleep with this idea, to wake up with this perception; to do all that one does with this great truth as the background, as a constant support, this great truth that we are witnessing the birth of a new world.

We can participate in it, we can become this new world. And truly, when one has such a marvellous opportunity, one should be ready to give up everything for its sake.

31 July 1957

Sweet Mother, on Friday the subject you gave for meditation was "How to awaken in the body an aspiration for the Divine."

Yes.

How to do it, Sweet Mother?

Naturally, there are many ways of doing it and, in fact, each one should find his own. But the starting-point may be very different, apparently almost the very opposite.

In former times, when yoga was a flight from life, it was a common practice for people, apart from a few predestined ones, not to think about yoga until they were old, when they had experienced much, known all the vicissitudes of life, its pleasures, its sorrows, its joys and miseries, its responsibilities, disillusionments, indeed all that life usually brings to human beings; and naturally, all this had disabused them a little of their illusions about the joys of existence, so they were ready to think of something else, and their body, if not full of youthful enthusiasm (!), was at least not a hindrance, for as it had been satiated, it no longer asked for much.... To start from this end is all very well when one wants to leave life behind with a spiritual attitude and does not expect any collaboration from it in the transformation. This is obviously the easiest method. But it is also obvious that if one wants this material existence to *participate* in the divine life, to be the field of action and realisation, it is preferable not to wait until with wear and tear the body becomes sufficiently... quiet so as not to obstruct the yoga. It is much better, on the contrary, to take it quite young when it is full of all its energies and can put enough ardour and

intensity into its aspiration. In this case, instead of relying on a weariness which no longer demands anything, one should rely on a kind of inner enthusiasm for the unknown, the new — for perfection. And if you have the good fortune to be in conditions where you can receive help and guidance from childhood, try while still very young to discern between the fugitive joys and superficial pleasures life can give and the marvellous thing that life, action, growth would be in a world of perfection and truth, where all the ordinary limitations, all the ordinary incapacities would be done away with.

When one is very young and as I say "well-born", that is, born with a conscious psychic being within, there is always, in the dreams of the child, a kind of aspiration, which for its child's consciousness is a sort of ambition, for something which would be beauty without ugliness, justice without injustice, goodness without limits, and a conscious, constant success, a perpetual miracle. One dreams of miracles when one is young, one wants all wickedness to disappear, everything to be always luminous, beautiful, happy, one likes stories which end happily. This is what one should rely on. When the body feels its miseries, its limitations, one must establish this dream in it — of a strength which would have no limit, a beauty which would have no ugliness, and of marvellous capacities: one dreams of being able to rise into the air, of being wherever it is necessary to be, of setting things right when they go wrong, of healing the sick; indeed, one has all sorts of dreams when one is very young.... Usually parents or teachers pass their time throwing cold water on it, telling you, "Oh! it's a dream, it is not a reality." They should do the very opposite! Children should be taught, "Yes, this is what you must try to realise and not only is it possible but it is *certain* if you come in contact with the part in you which is capable of doing this thing. This is what should guide your life, organise it, make you develop in the direction of the *true reality* which the ordinary world calls illusion."

This is what it should be, instead of making children

ordinary, with that dull, vulgar common sense which becomes an inveterate habit and, when something is going well, immediately brings up in the being the idea: "Oh, that won't last!", when somebody is kind, the impression, "Oh, he will change!", when one is capable of doing something, "Oh, tomorrow I won't be able to do it so well." This is like an acid, a destructive acid in the being, which takes away hope, certitude, confidence in future possibilities.

When a child is full of enthusiasm, never throw cold water on it, never tell him, "You know, life is not like that!" You should always encourage him, tell him, "Yes, at present things are not always like that, they *seem* ugly, but behind this there is a beauty that is trying to realise itself. This is what you should love and draw towards you, this is what you should make the object of your dreams, of your ambitions."

And if you do this when you are very small, you have much less difficulty than if later on you have to undo, undo all the bad effects of a bad education, undo that kind of dull and vulgar common sense which means that you expect nothing good from life, which makes it insipid, boring, and contradicts all the hopes, all the so-called illusions of beauty. On the contrary, you must tell a child — or yourself if you are no longer quite a baby — "Everything in me that seems unreal, impossible, illusory, *that* is what is true, *that* is what I must cultivate." When you have these aspirations: "Oh, not to be always limited by some incapacity, all the time held back by some bad will!", you must cultivate within you this certitude that *that* is what is essentially true and *that* is what must be realised.

Then faith awakens in the cells of the body. And you will see that you find a response in your body itself. The body itself will feel that if its inner will helps, fortifies, directs, leads, well, all its limitations will gradually disappear.

And so, when the first experience comes, which sometimes begins when one is very young, the first contact with the inner joy, the inner beauty, the inner light, the first contact with *that*,

which suddenly makes you feel, "Oh! that is what I want," you must cultivate it, never forget it, hold it constantly before you, tell yourself, "I have felt it once, so I can feel it again. This has been real for me, even for the space of a second, and that is what I am going to revive in myself".... And encourage the body to seek it — to seek it, *with the confidence* that it carries that possibility within itself and that if it calls for it, it will come back, it will be realised again.

This is what should be done when one is young. This is what should be done every time one has the opportunity to recollect oneself, commune with oneself, seek oneself.

And then you will see. When one is normal, that is to say, unspoilt by bad teaching and bad example, when one is born and lives in a healthy and relatively balanced and normal environment, the body, spontaneously, without any need for one to intervene mentally or even vitally, has the certitude that even if something goes wrong it will be cured. The body carries within itself the certitude of cure, the certitude that the illness or disorder is sure to disappear. It is only through the false education from the environment that gradually the body is taught that there are incurable diseases, irreparable accidents, and that it can grow old, and all these stories which destroy its faith and trust. But normally, the body of a normal child — the body, I am not speaking of the thought — the body itself feels when something goes wrong that it will certainly be all right again. And if it is not like that, this means that it has already been perverted. It seems *normal* for it to be in good health, it seems quite abnormal to it if something goes wrong and it falls ill; and in its instinct, its spontaneous instinct, it is sure that everything will be all right. It is only the perversion of thought which destroys this; as one grows up the thought becomes more and more distorted, there is the whole collective suggestion, and so, little by little, the body loses its trust in itself, and naturally, losing its self-confidence, it also loses the spontaneous capacity of restoring its equilibrium when this has been disturbed.

But if when very young, from your earliest childhood, you have been taught all sorts of disappointing, depressing things — things that cause decomposition, I could say, disintegration — then this poor body does its best but it has been perverted, put out of order, and no longer has the sense of its inner strength, its inner force, its power to react.

If one takes care not to pervert it, the body carries within itself the certitude of victory. It is only the wrong use we make of thought and its influence on the body which robs it of this certitude of victory. So, the first thing to do is to cultivate this certitude instead of destroying it; and when it is there, no effort is needed to aspire, but simply a flowering, an unfolding of that inner certitude of victory.

The body carries within itself the sense of its divinity. There. This is what you must try to find again in yourself if you have lost it.

When a child tells you a beautiful dream in which he had many powers and all things were very beautiful, be very careful never to tell him, "Oh! life is not like that", for you are doing something wrong. You must on the contrary tell him, "Life *ought to be* like that, and *it will be* like that!"

7 August 1957

Sri Aurobindo has written: "The descent of the Supermind will bring to one who receives it and is fulfilled in the truth-consciousness all the possibilities of the divine life. It will take up not only the whole characteristic experience which we recognise already as constituting the spiritual life but also all which we now exclude from that category...."

The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, Vol. 16, p. 47

So, what are you asking? What is excluded?

What do we exclude!... It depends on the person.

But what are you asking, really?

I don't see what we are excluding.

Ah! that's sensible. Here we profess we are excluding nothing. That's precisely the reason. We have taken up all human activities, whatever they may be, including those that are considered the least spiritual. But I must say it is very difficult to change their nature! But still, we are trying, we put all possible goodwill into it.

It is also said that the descent will make the change easier.[1]

[1] "A divine life on earth need not be a thing apart and exclusive having nothing to do with the common earthly existence: it will take up human being and human life, transform what can be transformed, spiritualise whatever can be spiritualised, cast its influence on the rest and effectuate either a radical or an uplifting change, bring about a deeper communion between the universal and the individual, invade the ideal with the spiritual truth of which it is a luminous shadow and help to uplift into or towards a greater and higher existence.... It is obvious that if the Supermind is there and an order of supramental being is established as the leading principle in earth-nature, as mind is now the leading principle, but with a sureness, a complete government of the earthly existence, a capacity of transformation of all upon their level and within their natural boundaries of which the mind in its imperfection was not capable, an immense change of human life, even if it did not extend to transformation would be inevitable."

The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, Vol. 16, pp. 47–49

There are two points which resist strongly — all that has to do with politics and all that has to do with money. These are the two points on which it is most difficult to change the human attitude.

In principle we have said that we have nothing to do with politics, and it is true that we have nothing to do with politics as it is practised at present. But it is quite obvious that if politics is taken in its true spirit, that is, as the organisation of human masses and all the details of government and regulation of the collective life, and relations with other collectivities — that is, with other nations, other countries — it must necessarily enter into the supramental transformation, for so long as national life and the relations between nations remain what they are, it is quite impossible to live a supramental life on earth. So it will just have to change; we shall have to deal with that too.

As for financial matters, that is, finding a means of exchange and production which is simple — "simple", well, which should be simple, simpler than the primitive system of exchange in which people had to give one thing to get another — something which could in principle be world-wide, universal; this is also altogether indispensable for the simplification of life. Now, with human nature, just the very opposite is happening! The situation is such that it has become almost — intolerable. It has become almost impossible to have the least relation with other countries, and that much-vaunted means of exchange which should have been a simplification has become such a complication that we shall soon reach a deadlock — we are very, very close to being unable to do anything, to being tied up in everything. If one wants the smallest thing from another country, one has to follow such complicated and laborious procedures that in the end one will stay in one's own little corner and be satisfied with the potatoes one can grow in one's garden, without hoping to know anything at all about what is going on and happening elsewhere.

Well, these two points are the most resistant. In the human consciousness this is most subject to the forces of ignorance,

inconscience and, I must say, quite generally, ill-will. This is what most refuses all progress and all advance towards the truth; and unfortunately, in every human individual this is also the point of resistance, the point that remains narrowly stupid and refuses to understand anything it is not used to. There it is truly a heroic act to want to take up these things and transform them. Well, we are trying this also, and unless it is done, it will be impossible to change the conditions of the earth.

It is relatively — very relatively — easier to change economic and social conditions than political and financial ones. There are certain general, global ideas from the economic and social point of view which are accessible to human thought: certain liberations, a certain widening, a certain collective organisation, which do not seem absolutely senseless and unrealisable; but as soon as you touch on the other two questions, which are however of capital importance, especially the political question, it is quite otherwise.... For, one might imagine a life which would get rid of all financial complications — although, without playing on words, it would be a veritable impoverishment. In what financial possibilities and processes bring, there is a very considerable wealth of possibilities, for if they were used in the right way and in the true spirit, that would simplify all human relations and undertakings to a very great extent and make possible a complexity of life which would be very difficult under other conditions. But I don't know why — except that the worst usually precedes the best — instead of taking the way of simplification, men have followed the way of complication to such a point that, in spite of the aeroplanes which carry you from one end of the world to the other in two days, in spite of all the modern inventions which try to make life so "small", so "close" that we could go round the world not in eighty days now but in a very few days, in spite of all that, the complications of exchange, for instance, are so great that many people can't get away from home — I mean from the country they live in — because they have no means of going to another one and if they

ask for the money they need to live in another country they are told, "Is it very important for you to go? You could perhaps wait a little, because it is very difficult for us at the moment...." I am not joking, it is quite serious, this does happen. That means we are becoming more and more the prisoners of the place where we are born, while all the scientific trends are towards such a great proximity between countries that we could very easily belong to the universe or, at any rate, to the whole world.

There. This is the situation. It has grown considerably worse since the last war; it grows worse year by year, and one finds oneself in such a ridiculous situation that, unfortunately, as one is at the end of one's resources, to simplify what has been made so complicated, there is an idea in the earth-atmosphere — an idea which might be called preposterous, but unhappily it is much worse than preposterous, it is catastrophic — the idea that if there were a great upheaval, perhaps it would be better afterwards.... One is so jammed between prohibitions, impossibilities, interdictions, rules, the complications of every second, that one feels stifled and really gets the admirable idea that if everything were demolished perhaps it would be better afterwards!... It is in the air. And all the governments have put themselves in such impossible conditions; they have become so tied up that it seems to them they will have to break everything to be able to move forward.... (*Silence*) This is unfortunately a little more than a possibility, it is a *very* serious threat. And it is not quite certain that life will not be made still more impossible because one feels incapable of emerging from the chaos — the chaos of complications — in which humanity has put itself. It is like the shadow — but unfortunately a very active shadow — of the new hope which has sprung up in the human consciousness, a hope and a need for something more harmonious; and the need becomes so much more acute as life, as it is at present organised, becomes more and more contrary to it. The two opposites are facing each other with such intensity that one can expect something like an explosion....

(*Silence*)

This is the condition of the earth, and it is not very bright. But for us one possibility remains — I have spoken about it to you several times already — even if, outside, things are deteriorating completely and the catastrophe cannot possibly be avoided, there remains for us, I mean those for whom the supramental life is not a vain dream, those who have faith in its reality and the aspiration to realise it — I don't necessarily mean those who have gathered here in Pondicherry, in the Ashram, but those who have as a link between them the knowledge Sri Aurobindo has given and the will to live according to that knowledge — there remains for them the possibility of intensifying their aspiration, their will, their effort, to gather their energies together and shorten the time for the realisation. There remains for them the possibility of working this miracle — individually and to a small extent collectively — of conquering space, duration, the time needed for this realisation; of replacing time by intensity of effort and going fast enough and far enough in the realisation to liberate themselves from the consequences of the present condition of the world; of making such a concentration of force, strength, light, truth, that by this very realisation they can be above these consequences and secure against them, enjoy the protection bestowed by the Light and Truth, by Purity — the divine Purity through the inner transformation — and that the storm may pass over the world without being able to destroy this great hope of the near future; that the tempest may not sweep away this beginning of realisation.

Instead of falling asleep in an easy quietude and letting things happen according to their own rhythm, if one strains to the utmost one's will, ardour, aspiration and springs up into the light, then one can hold one's head higher; one can have, in a higher region of consciousness, enough room to live, to breathe, to grow and develop above the passing cyclone.

This is possible. In a very small way, this was already done

during the last war, when Sri Aurobindo was here. It can be done again. But one must want it and each one must do his own work as sincerely and completely as he can.

14 August 1957

This evening, instead of answering questions, I would like us to meditate on the remembrance of Sri Aurobindo, on the way to keep it alive in us and on the gratitude we owe him for all that he has done and is still doing in his ever luminous, living and active consciousness for this great realisation which he came not only to announce to the Earth but also to realise, and which he continues to realise.

Tomorrow is the anniversary of his birth, an eternal birth in the history of the universe.

21 August 1957

Mother, for quite some time there has been a feeling that the general consciousness in our activities has fallen, especially since the Ashram has grown so large. What is the reason for it and how can we put it right?

Are you referring to all the activities of the Ashram or only to sports?... All the activities of the Ashram?

I don't know very many, Mother: in the ones I see.

(*After a long silence*) It is something rather complicated. I shall try to explain it.

For a very long time the Ashram was only a gathering of individuals, each one representing something, but as an individual and without any collective organisation. They were like separate pawns on a chess-board — united only in appearance — or rather by the purely superficial fact of living together in the same place and having a few habits in common — not even very many, only a few. Each one progressed — or didn't progress — according to his own capacity and with a minimum of relations with others. So, in accordance with the value of the individuals constituting this odd assemblage, one could say that there was a general value, but a very nebulous one, with no collective reality. This lasted a very long time — very long. And it is only quite recently that the need for a collective reality began to appear — which is not necessarily limited to the Ashram but embraces all who have declared themselves — I don't mean materially but in their consciousness — to be disciples of Sri Aurobindo and have tried to live his teaching. Among all of them, and more strongly since the manifestation of the supramental Consciousness and Force, there has awakened the necessity for a true communal life,

which would not be based only on purely material circumstances but would represent a deeper truth, and be the beginning of what Sri Aurobindo calls a supramental or gnostic community.... He has said, of course, that, for this, the individuals constituting this collectivity should themselves have this supramental consciousness; but even without attaining an individual perfection — even while very far from it — there was at the same time an inner effort to create this "collective individuality", so to speak. The need for a real union, a deeper bond has been felt and the effort has been directed towards that realisation.

This has caused some... disturbance, for the tendency was formerly so individualistic that certain habits have been upset, I don't mean materially, for things are not very different from what they were, but in a somewhat deeper consciousness. *And above all* — that is the point I want to emphasise — this has created a certain inner interdependence which has naturally lowered the individual level — a little — except for those who had already attained an inner realisation strong enough to be able to resist this movement of what I might call "levelling". And this is what gives the impression that the general level has fallen, which is not correct. The general level is on a higher plane than it formerly was, but the individual level has dropped in many cases, and individuals who were capable of one realisation or another have felt, without understanding why, weighed down by a load they did not have to carry before, which is the result of this interdependence. It is just a temporary effect which, on the other hand, will lead to an improvement, a very tangible general progress.

Of course, if each individual was conscious, if instead of yielding to this kind of levelling effect, he resisted it in order to transform, transmute, uplift the elements, influences, currents he receives from the group, then the *whole* would rise up into a higher consciousness far ahead of where it was before.

This is what I was aiming at — without explaining the thing to you in detail — when I spoke to you of a more and more

urgent need to make an effort, and I intended, in fact, to explain to you one day that the effort you could make individually, instead of being for only an individual progress, will spread, so to say, or have very important collective results. But I said nothing because for months I wanted to prepare the individual consciousness to admit, I might say, even perhaps to recognise, this necessity for a collective individuality. This is what must be explained now. There is no other reason for this kind of apparent fall which, in fact, is not one. It is the spiral movement of progress which makes it necessary to move away from a certain realisation in order to make it not only vaster but also higher. If every one collaborates consciously and with goodwill, it will go much faster.

It was an imperative necessity if one wanted this Ashram life to be viable. Everything that does not progress necessarily declines and perishes, and for the Ashram to last it had to make progress in its consciousness and become a living entity. There.

We are rather far away in the spiral from the line of realisation we had some years ago, but we shall come back to it on a higher level.

So that is the answer.

There may appear to be movements which seem to contradict what I have just told you, but that... it is always like that, for every time one wants to realise something, the first difficulty one meets is the opposition of all that was inactive before and now rises up to resist. All that does not want to accept this change naturally wakes up and revolts. But that is of no importance. It is the same thing as in the individual being: when you want to progress, the difficulty you want to conquer immediately increases tenfold in importance and intensity in your consciousness. There is but to persevere, that's all. It will pass.

28 August 1957

Mother, Sri Aurobindo says here: "Whether the whole of humanity would be touched [*by the Supramental influence*] *or only a part of it ready for the change would depend on what was intended or possible in the continued order of the universe."*

The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, Vol. 16, p. 56

What is meant by "what was intended or possible"? The two things are different. So far you have said that if humanity changes, if it wants to participate in the new birth...

It is the same thing. But when you look at an object on a certain plane, you see it horizontally, and when you look at the same object from another plane, you see it vertically. (*Mother shows the cover and the back of her book.*) So, if one looks from above, one says "intended"; if one looks from below, one says "possible".... But it is absolutely the same thing, only the point of view is different.

But in that case, it is not our incapacity or lack of will to change that makes any difference.

We have already said this many a time. If you remain in a consciousness which functions mentally, even if it is the highest mind, you have the notion of an absolute determinism of cause and effect and feel that things are what they are because they are what they are and cannot be otherwise.

It is only when you come out of the mental consciousness completely and enter a higher perception of things — which you may call spiritual or divine — that you suddenly find yourself in

a state of *perfect* freedom where *everything* is possible.

(*Silence*)

Those who have contacted that state or lived in it, even if only for a moment, try to describe it as a feeling of an absolute Will in action, which immediately gives to the human mentality the feeling of being arbitrary. And because of that distortion there arises the idea — which I might call traditional — of a supreme and arbitrary God, which is something most *unacceptable* to every enlightened mind. I suppose that this experience badly expressed is at the origin of this notion. And in fact it is incorrect to express it as an absolute Will: it is very, very, very different. It is something else altogether. For, what man understands by "Will" is a decision that is taken and carried out. We are obliged to use the word "will", but in its truth the Will acting in the universe is neither a choice nor a decision that is taken. What seems to me the closest expression is "vision". Things are because they are *seen*. But of course "seen", not seen as we see with these eyes. (*Mother touches her eyes...*) All the same, it is the nearest thing. It is a vision — a vision unfolding itself.

The universe becomes objective as it is progressively seen.

And that is why Sri Aurobindo has said "intended or possible". It is neither one nor the other. All that can be said is a distortion.

(*Silence*)

Objectivisation — universal objectivisation — is something like a projection in space and time, like a living image of what *is* from all eternity. And as the image is gradually projected on the screen of time and space, it becomes objective:

The Supreme contemplating His own Image.

4 September 1957

Today I received a question about a phrase I used on the fourteenth of August, the eve of Sri Aurobindo's birthday. And this question seemed interesting to me because it was about one of those rather cryptic phrases, that are almost ambiguous through simplification, and which was intended to be like that, so that each one might understand it according to his own plane of consciousness. I have already spoken to you several times of this possibility of understanding the same words on different planes; and these words were intentionally expressed with a simplification, a deliberate vagueness, precisely so that they would serve as a vehicle for the complexity of meaning they had to express.

This meaning is a little different on the different planes, but it is complementary, and it is only really complete when one is able to understand it on all these planes at once. True understanding is a simultaneous understanding in which all the meanings are perceived, grasped, understood at the same time; but to express them, as we have a very poor language at our disposal, we are obliged to say them one after another, with many words and many explanations.... That's what I am going to do now.

The question is about the phrase in which I spoke of the birth of Sri Aurobindo — it was on the eve of his birthday — and I called it an "eternal birth". I am asked what I meant by "eternal".

Of course, if the words are taken literally, an "eternal birth" doesn't signify much. But I am going to explain to you how there can be — and in fact is — a physical explanation or understanding, a mental understanding, a psychic understanding and a spiritual understanding.

Physically, it means that the consequences of this birth will last as long as the Earth. The consequences of Sri Aurobindo's

birth will be felt throughout the entire existence of the Earth. And so I called it "eternal", a little poetically.

Mentally, it is a birth the memory of which will last eternally. Through the ages Sri Aurobindo's birth will be remembered, with all the consequences it has had.

Psychically, it is a birth which will recur eternally, from age to age, in the history of the universe. This birth is a manifestation which takes place periodically, from age to age, in the history of the Earth. That is, the birth itself is renewed, repeated, reproduced, bringing every time perhaps something more — something more complete and more perfect — but it is the same movement of descent, of manifestation, of birth in an earthly body.

And finally, from the purely spiritual point of view, it could be said that it is the birth of the Eternal on Earth. For each time the Avatar takes a physical form it is the birth of the Eternal himself on Earth.

All that, contained in two words: "eternal birth".

So, to conclude, I advise you, in future, before telling yourself: "Why! What does this mean? I don't understand it at all; perhaps it is not expressed properly," you could say to yourself: "Perhaps I am not on the plane where I would be able to understand", and try to find behind the words something more than mere words. There.

I think this will be a good subject for our meditation.

(*Meditation*)

11 September 1957

Sweet Mother, why does one feel attracted at first sight to some people and feel a repulsion for others?

Usually this is based on vital affinities, nothing else. There are vital vibrations which harmonise and vital vibrations which don't. It is usually this, nothing else. It is vital chemistry.

One would have to be in a much deeper and more clear-sighted consciousness for it to be otherwise. There is an inner perception based on a psychic consciousness, which makes you feel which people have the same aspiration, the same aim, and can be your companions on the way; and this perception also makes you clear-sighted about those who follow a very different way or carry in them forces which are hostile to you and may harm you in your development. But to attain such a perception one must oneself be exclusively occupied with one's own spiritual progress and integral realisation. Now, that is not often the case. And usually too, when one has attained this inner clear-sightedness, it is not expressed by attraction and repulsion, but by a very "objective" knowledge, it might be said, and a kind of inner certainty which makes you act calmly and reasonably, and without attractions and repulsions.

Therefore, it may be said in a general and almost absolute way that those who have very definite and impulsive likes and dislikes live in a vital consciousness. Mixed with this, there may be mental affinities; that is, some minds like to have relationships in common activities, but here too, these are people on a much higher level intellectually, and this is also expressed even more by a comparative ease in relationships and by something much more calm and detached. One takes pleasure in speaking with certain people, for others there is no attraction, one gains nothing from it. It is a little more distant and quiet; it belongs more to the

field of reason. But likes and dislikes clearly belong to the vital world. Well, there is a vital chemistry just as there is physical chemistry: there are bodies which repel each other and others which attract; there are substances which combine and others which explode, and it is like that. There are some vital vibrations which harmonise, and harmonise to such an extent that ninety-nine times out of a hundred these sympathies are taken for what men call love, and suddenly people feel, "Oh! He is the one I was waiting for", "Oh! She is the one I was seeking!" (*laughing*), and they rush towards each other, till they find out that it was something very superficial and that these things can't last. There. So the first advice given to those who want to do yoga: "Rise above likes and dislikes." This is something without any deeper reality and it can at the very least lead you into difficulties which are at times quite hard to overcome. You can ruin your life with these things. And the best thing is not to take any notice of them — to draw back a little into yourself and ask yourself why — it's nothing very mysterious — you like to meet this person, don't like to meet that one.

But, as I say, there comes a moment when one is exclusively occupied with one's sadhana, when one can feel — but both more subtly and much more quietly — that a particular contact is favourable to sadhana and another harmful. But that always takes a much more "detached" form, so to say, and often it even contradicts the so-called attractions and repulsions of the vital; very often it has nothing to do with them.

So, the best thing is to look at all that from a little distance and to lecture yourself a little on the futility of these things.

Obviously there are some natures which are almost fundamentally bad, beings who are born wicked and love to do harm; and logically, if one is quite natural, not perverted, natural as animals are — for from this point of view they are far superior to men; perversion begins with humanity — then one keeps out of the way, as one would stand aside from something fundamentally harmful. But happily these cases are not very

frequent; what one meets in life are usually very mixed natures where there is a kind of balance, so to say, between the good and the bad, and one may expect to have both good and bad relations. There is no reason to feel any deep dislike, for, as one is quite mixed oneself (*laughing*), like meets like!

It is also said that some people are like vampires, and when they come near a person they spontaneously suck up his vitality and energy, and that one should beware of them as of a very serious danger. But that also... Not that it doesn't exist, but it is not very frequent, and certainly not so total that one need run away when one meets such a person.

So, essentially, if one wants to develop spiritually, the first thing to do is to overcome one's dislikes... and one's likes. Look at all that with a smile.

(*Silence*)

"A new humanity would then be a race of mental beings on the earth and in the earthly body but delivered from its present conditions in the reign of the cosmic Ignorance so far as to be possessed of a perfected mind, a mind of light which could even be a subordinate action of the supermind or Truth-Consciousness and in any case capable of the full possibilities of mind acting as a recipient of that truth and at least a secondary action of it in thought and life. It could even be a part of what could be described as a divine life upon earth and at least the beginnings of an evolution in the Knowledge and no longer entirely or predominantly in the Ignorance. How far this would go, whether it would eventually embrace the whole of humanity or only an advanced portion of it, would depend upon the intention in the evolution itself, on the intention in whatever cosmic or transcendent Will is guiding the movements of the universe."

The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, Vol. 16, p. 60

Is this intention unknown?

Do you know it? Do you?

It is self-evident that evolution has a goal and therefore cannot stop short now.

You know this because you have read Sri Aurobindo's books! But take any man in the street and ask him what the intention of the universe and the evolution is; you will see what reply he gives you! That he knows nothing about it. Naturally, those who have read and studied Sri Aurobindo's books at least think they know something about it. When Sri Aurobindo wrote this, he wrote it quite obviously for people who were not interested in yoga and had not read his books. He wrote it for people who were concerned with physical education, so he put himself in their place, expressed their ideas and tried to lead them a little farther. He took the standpoint of those who had never read his books.

But you said "it is self-evident." There are many people here — several hundred — if you ask them individually, not to repeat to you what they have read, but what they themselves feel and think about the intention of universal evolution and whether there is any intention in the universal evolution... I don't think there would be many who could tell you in all sincerity: "It is like this, it is like that, it is this.... It is obviously that." Some of them could quote passages from Sri Aurobindo, but otherwise...

If you yourself stop thinking, if you stop thinking with the help of what you have read, and try to express your personal experience, have you any certainty?

I am not speaking, you see, of the result of what you have read or learnt or all that; I am speaking of the result of your personal experience, your own, something that's evident to you because it is your own life, it is your own experience — are you capable of describing it?

Yes.

Yes! Well, I congratulate you.

In spite of myself, it does happen.

Well, very good. I hope there are many more like you, that's all.

There are many conflicting elements in me, but all the same there is something...

Yes, that's good, that's good — it is very good.

So I can tell you that you have not wasted your time since you have been here! (*Laughter*)

Well, we are going to look at this within ourselves.

(*Meditation*)

18 September 1957

Mother, what place will occultism have in the supramental life?

Why particularly occultism?

Because everything will be known, won't it?

Why occultism? There is a place for everything in the supramental life.

Does this interest you specially?

According to what we know about occultism, it is the science which shows us things that are invisible to us, the invisible world, the invisible forces.... But in the supramental world all this will be known.

What do you understand by occultism?

The knowledge of the invisible world and invisible forces.

And so — I don't quite understand. In the supermind one will no longer have any knowledge, or what?

One will have the knowledge already, so...

Already.... But then it will be an occult knowledge! I don't quite understand. Occultism is a special way of dealing with things. In *The Life Divine* Sri Aurobindo has explained this in great detail. It is a special approach to knowledge and action, and there is no reason why it should disappear or why....

It will become the natural consciousness. Then perhaps one won't need to learn this occult knowledge.

Oh, you think one learns occultism as one learns to play the piano! (*Laughter*) But it is not quite like that, anyway, that things happen. In fact, those who have no special aptitude could read all the books on occultism in the world and never know how to practise it. It needs a special capacity.

It is true that you may also read all the books in the world on how to play the piano — if you do not play, you will never know how to play. But there are born musicians, born artists, and there are people who may work at it all their lives and never come to anything at all. It is the same thing with occultism. If you mean that when one becomes a supramental being, one will have the gift of doing everything, very well, but that doesn't imply that the gift is spontaneous. It is possible that you might have to concentrate on the subject and then learn your work. And it is also possible that one may be potentially capable of doing everything but it is not necessary that one has to do everything! There will be differences and classifications all the same, and special functions according to people and their individual tastes. I don't see why you should deprive the supramental world particularly of occult activity more than of any other.

How do you conceive of the supramental life? As a paradise in which everyone will do the same thing in the same way?... The old conception of paradise where everybody became an angel playing the harp? It is not quite like that! All the differences will be there, all differentiations and different activities, but instead of acting in the ordinary human ignorance, one will act with knowledge, that's all; that is what will make the difference.

And the capacities will also increase, won't they?

Capacities?... You take occultism in the sense of the power to

act on life and things, as a process; but that is not occultism, that is magic.

Occultism is a special use of the consciousness, that's all. That is, at the moment, as it is practised by human beings, it is a direct and conscious perception of the forces behind appearances and the play of these forces, and because one has the direct perception of them, one has the power to act on them, and one makes some higher will intervene in the play of these forces in order to obtain a required result.

In the supramental world one will have these powers spontaneously.

Spontaneously!... But everybody practises occultism without knowing that he does. Everybody has this power spontaneously but doesn't know he has it. It may be a very slight one, like a pin-head; it may be as vast as the Earth or even the universe. But you cannot live without practising occultism, only you don't know it. So the only difference you can make is that when one has the supramental consciousness one will know it. That is all. So, your question automatically vanishes.

When you think — I have explained this to you I don't know how many times — when you think, you are practising occultism. Only, you don't know it. When you are thinking of someone, some part of you is automatically in contact with this person, and if to your thought is added a will that this person may be like this or like that or do this or that or understand this or that — whatever it may be — well, you are practising occultism, only you don't know it.... There are people who do this with power, and when they have a strong thought it manifests and is realised. There are people in whom it is very feeble and they do not obtain many results. It depends on the power of your thought and also on your power of concentration. But this kind of occultism everybody practises without even knowing it. So the difference from someone who really practises

occultism is that he knows he is doing it and perhaps how he does it.

But as you have spoken to us so often of Mr. X who was a great occultist, I thought that in the supramental world it would be something natural. All would be as capable as he.

But why this in particular? That is what I don't understand! Why particularly occultism?

Because I thought that all knowledge of the invisible world entered the sphere of occultism.

Yes.

So, now, in ordinary life man is unconscious, half conscious; but in the full consciousness he would also have the full consciousness of occultism.

No, this is all very well, but do you believe that in the supramental life there will no longer be any classification of activities, or what? That everything will be mixed up in a general spontaneous capacity?

No, there will also be a hierarchy.

There will always be different ways of dealing with things. Perhaps the occult *power* will be more common, but if you imagine a world where everyone has equally the same occult power, there will no longer be any difference. You understand? There are people who have the occult power and act on those who haven't, but if everyone has it equally it will no longer be occultism!... Is that what you meant?

Yes.

Ah!... Well, I am convinced that even in the most perfect supramental realisation there will *always* be a differentiation between the capacities and functions of each one; but instead of being or not being in one's right place, of doing or not doing what one ought to do, unconsciously, one will be in one's right place — I hope always in one's place — and will always do what one ought to do, consciously. That is, instead of always trying to know and groping in the dark, one will know what one ought to do and do it well. But that is the whole difference. Differentiations will be there, each one will have his own role, his own place, each one will have his own activity. Don't think that everybody will begin to look alike and do the same thing in the same way! That would be a terrible world.

We could say that the difference between the supramental world and our present world will be this: what you don't know, you will know, what you can't do, you will be able to do, and what you don't understand, you will understand, and of what you are unconscious, you will become conscious. But fundamentally this is the basis of the new creation: to replace ignorance by knowledge and unconsciousness by consciousness, and weakness by strength. But this does not necessarily mean that everything is going to be so mixed up that it is scarcely recognisable!

(*Long silence*)

Sri Aurobindo has told us that in the Supermind itself there are different planes of realisation and that these planes will manifest successively, with the same progressive movement that has always presided over the universal development. And simply because, till today, it is a world that is closed to the greater part of mankind or hardly half-open to some, it is difficult to conceive of this progress in the supramental life, but it will exist;

and the moment there is progress, there is ascension, and there is a perfection which develops according to a law of its own, which is gradually unveiled to the consciousness — *even* to a fully illumined consciousness — and works in the truth instead of working in ignorance.... This something[1] which is not there completely, totally, all at once — it could almost be said massively — in the Manifestation but is progressive, will follow the same law of development as that of the world we live in now, but instead of not knowing where we are going, well, we shall know the way and follow it consciously. Instead of standing there imagining or guessing or speculating about what ought to be, we shall see where we are going and know how to go there. That will be the essential difference. Certainly it will not be a dull existence in which everything goes on indefinitely without changing.

I believe there is always a tendency in the human consciousness to want to get somewhere, to sit down and feel it is at last all over: "We have arrived, we settle down and don't move any more!" That would be a poor type of Supermind.

But this ascending, progressive movement towards a growing perfection will be still more prominent, certainly, and instead of unfolding itself in the darkness where everybody is blind and gropes along, it will unfold in the light and one will have the joy of knowing where one is going and what one is doing. That's all.

So one must not come and ask, "Will this be there?" or "Won't that be there?" There will be many more things still than we have now. Every possible thing will be there.

[1] When this talk was first published, Mother defined this 'something': "The unmanifest which will use the supramental world to manifest itself."

25 September 1957

> *"A new humanity means for us the appearance, the development of a type or race of mental beings whose principle of mentality would be no longer a mind in the Ignorance seeking for knowledge but even in its knowledge bound to the Ignorance, a seeker after Light but not its natural possessor, open to the Light but not an inhabitant of the Light, not yet a perfected instrument, truth-conscious and delivered out of the Ignorance. Instead, it would be possessed already of what could be called a mind of Light, a mind capable of living in the truth, capable of being truth-conscious and manifesting in its life a direct in place of an indirect knowledge. Its mentality would be an instrument of the Light and no longer of the Ignorance. At its highest it would be capable of passing into the supermind and from the new race would be recruited the race of supramental beings who would appear as the leaders of the evolution in earth-nature."*
>
> *The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, Vol. 16, p. 67*

This was certainly what he expected of us, what he conceived of as the superman who must be the intermediate being between humanity as it is and the supramental being *created* in the supramental way, that is, no longer belonging to animality at all and delivered from all animal needs.

As we are, we have been created in the ordinary animal way, and therefore, even if we transform ourselves, there will remain something of this animal origin. The supramental being as he conceived of it, is not formed in the ordinary animal way *at all* but directly, through a process that for the moment still seems occult to us, but is a direct handling of forces and substance in

such a way that the body can be a "materialisation" and not a formation according to the ordinary animal principle.

It is quite obvious that intermediate beings are necessary, that it is these intermediate beings who must find the means of creating beings of the supermind, and, undoubtedly, when Sri Aurobindo wrote this he was convinced that this is what we must do.

I think — I know — that it is now certain that we shall realise what he expects of us. It has become no longer a hope but a certainty. Only the time necessary for this realisation will be longer or shorter according to our individual effort, our concentration, our goodwill... and the *importance* we give to this fact. For the inattentive observer things may appear very much what they were before, but for one who knows how to see and is not deceived by appearances things are going well.

Let each one do his best and perhaps not many years will have to elapse before the first visible results become apparent to all.

It is for you to know whether this interests you more than everything else in the world.... There comes a moment when the body itself finds that there is *nothing in the world* which is so worth living for as this transformation; that there is nothing which can have as great an interest as this passionate interest of transformation. It is as though all the cells of the body were athirst for that Light which wants to manifest; they cry out for it, they find an intense joy in it and are *sure* of the Victory.

This is the aspiration that I am trying to communicate to you, and you will understand that everything else in life is dull, insipid, futile, worthless in comparison with that: the transformation in the Light.

2 October 1957

"The essential character of Supermind is a Truth-Consciousness which knows by its own inherent right of nature, by its own light: it has not to arrive at knowledge but possesses it. It may indeed, especially in its evolutionary action, keep knowledge behind its apparent consciousness and bring it forward as if from behind the veil; but even then this veil is only an appearance and does not really exist: the knowledge was always there, the consciousness its possessor and present revealer.... In the Mind of Light when it becomes full-orbed this character of the Truth reveals itself though in a garb that is transparent even when it seems to cover: for this too is a truth-consciousness and a self-power of knowledge. This too proceeds from the Supermind and depends upon it even though it is limited and subordinate. What we have called specifically the Mind of Light is indeed the last of a series of descending planes of consciousness in which the Supermind veils itself by a self-chosen limitation or modification of its self-manifesting activities, but its essential character remains the same: there is in it an action of light, of truth, of knowledge in which inconscience, ignorance and error claim no place. It proceeds from knowledge to knowledge; we have not yet crossed over the borders of the truth-conscious into ignorance."

The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, *Vol. 16, pp. 70–71*

Sweet Mother, I did not understand this passage: "In the Mind of Light when it becomes full-orbed this character of the Truth reveals itself though in a garb that is transparent even when it seems to cover..."

And so? What is it you don't understand?

This garb that is transparent and...

This is an image.

It is somewhat like this. In the supramental vision one has a direct and total and immediate knowledge of things, in the sense that one sees everything at the same time, complete in itself, total. The truth of a thing in all its aspects at the same time and... simultaneous, complete. And as soon as one wants to explain that or to describe it, one is obliged to come down, so to say, to a plane which he calls here "the Mind of Light", where things have to be said or even thought or expressed one after another, in a certain order and a certain relation with one another; the simultaneity disappears, for in the present state of our mode of expression, to say everything at the same time, all at once, is impossible, and we are compelled to veil one part of what we see or know in order to bring it out one thing after another; and this is what he calls the "veil", which is transparent, for one sees everything, knows everything at the same time; one has the total knowledge of a thing, but one cannot express it fully all at once. There are no words or any possibility of expression, so long as we are what we are. We must necessarily make use of an inferior process to express ourselves, and yet, at the same time we have the full knowledge; it is only the necessity of transmitting his knowledge in words which compels us to veil, so to say, a part of what we know and to let it come out only successively. But it is a transparent veil, for we know the thing — we know it, see it, understand it in its totality — but we cannot express it all at the same time. We have to say it, one thing after another, successively. It is the veil of the expression adapted to our needs both of utterance and understanding. The knowledge is there, it is there in reality — not that one is searching for it and expressing it as one goes on finding it — it is there in its totality but the

expression demands that one says it one thing after another; and so this naturally diminishes the omnipotence of which he speaks, for omnipotence is the total vision of the thing expressed in its totality. Omniscience is there in principle, it is there, perceptible, but the total power of this omniscience cannot act since it needs to come down one plane to be able to express itself.

Do you catch what I mean? Yes?

To be able to live fully in the supramental knowledge requires other means of expression than the ones we have now. New means of expression must be worked out to make it possible to express the supramental knowledge in a supramental way.... Now, we are obliged to raise our mental capacity to its utmost so that there is only, so to say, a sort of hardly perceptible borderline, but one that still exists, for all our means of expression still belong to this mental world, do not have the supramental capacity. We do not have the necessary organs for that. We would have to become beings of the supermind, with a supramental substance, a supramental inner organisation, in order to be able to express the supramental knowledge in a supramental way. So far we are... half way; we can, somewhere in our consciousness, rise entirely into the supramental vision and knowledge, but we cannot express it. We have to come down again one plane in order to express ourselves.

So, this veil which is transparent even when it seems to cover, is transparent for the consciousness, you see, for the consciousness sees and knows things in a supramental way, but one part is veiled and it only comes out progressively, for there is no other way of doing it. But for the consciousness it is transparent, though apparently it seems to hide. That's it.

(*Silence*)

I have been asked some questions about the film we saw

yesterday....[1] The first one is to say the least bizarre! I am giving it to you exactly as it is here. I am asked:

> *"Is the real Buddha you know, whom you speak of in* Prayers and Meditations,[2] *the same as the one whose statues are worshipped?"*

Statues... there are thousands of statues of the Buddha. There is the Buddha as he is known in India, the Buddha known in Ceylon, the Buddha known in Tibet, the Buddha known in China, in Cambodia, Thailand, Japan and elsewhere. If you are speaking of the historical fact, I think they would all tell you that it is to the Gautama Buddha of India they pray, but in fact, each one of these branches of Buddhism, and many more, has its own conception of the Buddha, and it is the conception of a godhead which is worshipped in statues, much more than a divine being, so... If you show me a statue and ask me, "In this statue is there the influence or the presence of the Buddha as you know him?", I could reply yes or no to you; but when you say "whose statues are worshipped", I cannot answer you, for that depends on what they have drawn into the statue they worship. Historically, it is always the same name but in fact I don't know if it is always the same spiritual person! So I cannot answer you.

If you ask me about the statues we saw yesterday... You saw how many there were and some of them were very, very different, it was a very different Buddha. There was one which was shown to us very often, and which is quite authentic, but there were many others which represented at the very least other personalities of the Buddha. It depends on what you mean; if you mean historically, yes, they always say it is the Buddha; but each statue is different.

So, that's one question. Now we come to something quite different:

[1] An English documentary on the Buddha: *Gautama Buddha.*
[2] *Prayers and Meditations*, 20 and 21 December 1916.

"In what way can the teaching of the Buddha now be an obstacle or help to humanity on the path of supramentalisation?"

Everything that helps humanity to make progress is a help, and all that prevents it from making progress is an obstacle!

In fact, you are asking this because we study and meditate on the Dhammapada....[3] Naturally, I took this text because I consider that at a particular stage of development it can be very useful. It is a discipline which has been crystallised in certain formulas and if one uses these formulas profitably, it can be very helpful, otherwise I wouldn't have taken it. How helpful depends on each one. It depends on whether one knows how to profit from it or not.

And then, the last question:

"Sri Aurobindo has said that the Buddha was an avatar...."

We have said this several times already.

And then, here it becomes very mysterious:

"Apart from the teaching of the Buddha, what remains of his personality in the world?"

(*To the disciple who had asked the question*) Why do you make this distinction?

When he entered into Nirvana, it was said that his teaching would now remain in the relics.

In the relics! Well, then that means the two things go together. I

[3] For some months, every Friday in the younger children's class Mother used to read a few verses from the Dhammapada, the most sacred text of Buddhist Teaching.

don't see why you separate them. There is something of his influence in his teaching, naturally! It is the teaching that transmits his influence in the mental field.

His direct action, apart from his teaching, is limited to a very few people who are very fervent believers and have the power of evocation. Otherwise, the most important part of his action, almost the whole of his action, is associated, united, fused with his teaching. It seems difficult to make a distinction.

(*After a silence*) The forms of Divine Power which have incarnated in different beings, have incarnated with a specific aim, for a specific action, at a specific moment of universal development, but essentially they are only differentiated aspects of the One Being; therefore, it is in the particular purpose of the action that the difference lies. Otherwise it is always the same Truth, the same Power, the same eternal Life which manifests in these forms and creates these forms at a given moment for a specific reason and a specific aim; this is preserved in history, but eternally they are new forms which are used for new progress. Old forms can endure as a vibration lasts, but their purpose historically, it could be said, was momentary, and one form is replaced by another in order that a new step forward may be taken. The mistake humanity makes is that it always hangs on to what is behind it and wants to perpetuate the past indefinitely. These things must be used at the time when they are useful. For there is a history of *each* individual development; you may pass through stages in which these disciplines have their momentary utility, but when you have gone beyond that moment you ought to enter into something else and see that historically it was useful but now is so no longer. Certainly, to those who have reached, for instance, a certain state of development and mental control, I won't say, "Read the Dhammapada and meditate on it"; it would be a waste of time. I give it to those who have not gone beyond the stage where it is necessary. But always man takes upon his shoulders an interminable burden. He does not want to drop anything of the

past and he stoops more and more under the weight of a useless accumulation.

You have a guide for a part of the way but when you have travelled this part leave the road and the guide and go farther! This is something men find difficult to do. When they get hold of something which helps them, they cling to it, they do not want to move any more. Those who have progressed with the help of Christianity do not want to give it up and they carry it on their shoulders; those who have progressed with the help of Buddhism do not want to leave it and they carry it on their shoulders, and so this hampers the advance and you are indefinitely delayed.

Once you have passed the stage, let it drop, let it go! Go farther.

Mother, the present religio-political movement for the revival of Buddhism...

What? Oh! I don't take part in politics. It is altogether useless. People use things just for political ends, but that is not at all interesting.

9 October 1957

Mother reads the last pages of *The Supramental Manifestation.*

"Even in the material world which seems to us a world of ignorance, a world of the workings of a blind and inconscient Force starting from inconscience and proceeding through Ignorance and reaching with difficulty towards an imperfect Light and Knowledge, there is still a secret Truth in things which arranges all, guides towards the Self many contrary powers of being and rises towards its own heights where it can manifest its own highest truth and fulfil the secret purpose of the universe. Even this material world of existence is built upon a pattern of the truth in things which we call Law of Nature, a truth from which we climb to a greater truth until we emerge in the Light of the Supreme. This world is not really created by a blind force of Nature: even in the Inconscient the presence of the supreme Truth is at work; there is a seeing Power behind it which acts infallibly and the steps of the Ignorance itself are guided even when they seem to stumble; for, what we call the Ignorance is a cloaked Knowledge, a Knowledge at work in a body not its own but moving towards its own supreme self-discovery. This Knowledge is the covert Supermind which is the support of the creation and is leading all towards itself and guides behind this multitude of minds and creatures and objects which seem each to be following its own law of nature; in this vast and apparently confused mass of existence there is a law, a one truth of being, a guiding and fulfilling purpose of the world-existence. The Supermind is veiled here and does not work according to its characteristic

> *law of being and self-knowledge, but without it nothing could reach its aim. A world governed by an ignorant mind would soon drift into a chaos; it could not in fact come into existence or remain in existence unless supported by the secret Omniscience of which it is the cover; a world governed by a blind inconscient force might repeat constantly the same mechanical workings but it would mean nothing and arrive nowhere. This could not be the cause of an evolution that creates life out of Matter, out of life mind, and a gradation of planes of Matter, Life and Mind culminating in the emergence of Supermind. The secret truth that emerges in Supermind has been there all the time, but now it manifests itself and the truth in things and the meaning of our existence."*
>
> *The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, Vol. 16, pp. 73–74*

In fact this was not finished. It stopped short there. There were others to come....

(*Silence*)

So, we are going to finish without questions?

> *Mother, about the last paragraph here, there is a question: If the Supermind is hidden behind things, why is it so difficult to find it?*

Because it is hidden! (*Laughter*)

> *Even in the Ignorance it is working, it leads to the Truth....*

Sri Aurobindo explains that if the supramental truth had not been there behind things, the world could never have been organised, even as it is organised now. We have the feeling of a

consciousness with a very enlightened will which has organised everything in accordance with a very precise plan, which cannot be the result either of ignorance or of unconsciousness. In fact, your difficulty in perceiving the Supermind or the Truth-Consciousness behind things indicates the *exact* measure of your personal ignorance and unconsciousness; for those who have come out of this ignorance and unconsciousness see it very clearly. The difficulty depends on the state of unconsciousness one is in. But for one who has gone beyond this state of unconsciousness it is not at all difficult to find the Supermind; it is very perceptible.

(*Silence*)

If one enters into a somewhat philosophical, psychological and subjective consciousness, one can very easily become aware of a sort of "objective unreality" of things; and the one thing which is real, tangible, concrete, measurable, so to speak, for the ordinary consciousness becomes so fluid, almost unsubstantial, and has a reality only in the consciousness that perceives it — an absolutely variable reality and at times quite contradictory according to the perception of the consciousness. If we put before us the different explanations that have been given about the world, the different ways in which it has been expressed, we shall have a series of notions that are sometimes absolutely contradictory, which are nevertheless perceptions of one identical thing by different consciousnesses. In fact, with this last paragraph, we have an extreme point which is the affirmation that all that is, is the total and complete expression of the Divine Will — there is what could be called a certain school of thinkers who, on the basis of their personal experience, have asserted that everything is the expression of the Divine Will in a perfect way — and then, at the other extreme, the affirmation that the world is a sort of chaos without rhyme or reason, which has come into being one doesn't know how or why, which is going one doesn't know

where, which has no logic, no reason, no coordination — it is just chance. It happens to be like this, one doesn't know why. Well, if you take these two extremes and put before you all that has been said, written, taught, thought about the world from one end to the other, and if you can see all that together, you will realise that, since it is all about the same world and yet the explanations are so totally different, this world exists, so to say, only in the consciousness of the one who sees it.... There must indeed be "something" there, but that something must be beyond what men think about it — far beyond, very different. And so the whole feeling is of an elusive unreality.

And in fact, the reality of the world is entirely subjective for each person's consciousness. The world has no objective reality, for in one case it can be said that it is the result of the supremely conscious, supreme Will and that all is ruled by that, and in the other case, it may be said that it is something without any reason for existence except an elusive chance — and yet, these two notions apply to one and the same thing.

Have you never thought about that?

Everyone has his own idea which is more or less clear, more or less organised, more or less precise, and this idea he calls the world. Everyone has his own way of seeing, his own way of feeling and his particular relationship with everything else, and this he calls the world. He naturally puts himself at the centre, and then everybody is organised around him, according to the way in which he sees it, feels it, understands and desires it, according to his own reaction, but since for each consciousness, individually, it is different, this means that what we call the world — the thing in itself — escapes our perception completely. It must be something else. And we must come out of our individual consciousness to be able to understand what it is; and this is what Sri Aurobindo calls the passage from the lower to the higher hemisphere. In the lower hemisphere there are as many universes as individuals, and in the higher hemisphere there is "something" — which is what it is — in which all consciousnesses must meet.

This is what he calls the "Truth-Consciousness".

As the human consciousness progresses, it has a greater and greater sense of this relativity, and at the same time a sort of feeling, it could be said, a vague impression that there is a Truth, which is not perceptible by ordinary means but must be perceptible in some way or other.

That is all. So I hope that with our next book, *The Life Divine*, we shall find the key to the problem.

16 October 1957

I have received four questions. Naturally they are not about what I have just read, and they are on three different subjects. And each one needs a very lengthy answer. But still, I am going to take the first two which go together. They are about the involution of the Spirit.[1]

The first question:

> *"If all that is to manifest is already involved in Matter, are there, hidden in it, other principles besides the supermind which will be revealed when it has been fully manifested?"*

Logically speaking, "yes", for essentially, there is an identity between Matter and the Supreme. But — and this brings in the second question:

> *"Did the involution take place in Time and does it have a history as evolution has?"*

It could almost be said that the answer to this question depends on the mental attitude of the person who asks it.... Scholars will tell you that there are different schools which have spoken about these things in ways that are also very different. There are the metaphysicians who deny any history, minds that are essentially speculative, philosophical and, as I said, metaphysical, abstract, who consider that histories are only for children. There are the psychologists who translate everything into movements

[1] Sri Aurobindo tells us that evolution is the result of an involution. Thus, life is involved in Matter, mind is involved in life and supermind is involved in mind. Nothing can come out of nothing; it is because the Supreme is involved in Matter that the Supreme can emerge from Matter. — Editor

of consciousness, and finally there are those who love images and for whom universal history is a great development which might be described as "cinematographic", and this development in pictures is for them something much more living and tangible, for even if it is only symbolic, it makes them understand things in a more intimate and real way.

It goes without saying that the three explanations are equally true, and that the important thing is to be able to synthesise and harmonise them in one's thought. But we shall put aside the aridities of metaphysics, for it is better to read about them in the books of scholars who tell you things in a very precise, very exact and very dry fashion! The psychological point of view... it is better to live it than speak about it. So we are left with the story for children. It is good to be always a child. And although we must take care not to believe in it as a dogma in which nothing should be changed if one doesn't want to be sacrilegious, we can at least take these stories as a means to make living to our childlike consciousness something which would otherwise be too remote from us.

There we can choose from many stories that have been told, stories more or less true, more or less complete, more or less expressive. But if by interiorising or exteriorising oneself — which, from a certain point of view, is essentially the same thing — if one can relive this story, at least partially and in its broad outlines, it helps one to understand and hence to master the how and why of things. Some people have done that, they are the ones usually considered as initiates, occultists and prophets at the same time — and very beautiful stories have been told.

I am going to tell you one, very succinctly. Don't take it as a gospel! Take it rather... as a story.

When the Supreme decided to exteriorise Himself in order to be able to see Himself, the first thing in Himself which He exteriorised was the Knowledge of the world and the Power to create it. This Knowledge-Consciousness and Force began its work; and in the supreme Will there was a plan, and the first

principle of this plan was the expression of both the essential Joy and the essential Freedom, which seemed to be the most interesting feature of this creation.

So intermediaries were needed to express this Joy and Freedom in forms. And at first four Beings were emanated to start this universal development which was to be the progressive objectivisation of all that is potentially contained in the Supreme. These Beings were, in the principle of their existence: Consciousness and Light, Life, Bliss and Love, and Truth.

You can easily imagine that they had a sense of great power, great strength, of something tremendous, for they were essentially the very principle of these things. Besides, they had full freedom of choice, for this creation was to be Freedom itself.... As soon as they set to work — they had their own conception of how it had to be done — being totally free, they chose to do it independently. Instead of taking the attitude of servant and instrument of which Sri Aurobindo speaks in what I have just read to you,[2] they naturally took the attitude of the master, and this mistake — as I may call it — was the first cause, the essential cause of all the disorder in the universe. As soon as there was separation — for that is the essential cause, separation — as soon as there was separation between the Supreme and what had been emanated, Consciousness changed into inconscience, Light into darkness, Love into hatred, Bliss into suffering, Life into death and Truth into falsehood. And they proceeded with their creations independently, in separation and disorder.

The result is the world as we see it. It was made progressively, stage by stage, and it would truly take a little too long to tell you all that, but finally, the consummation is Matter — obscure, inconscient, miserable.... The creative Force which

[2] "The sword has a joy in the battle-play, the arrow has a mirth in its hiss and its leaping, the earth has a rapture in its dizzy whirl through space, the sun has the royal ecstasy of its blazing splendours and its eternal motion. O thou self-conscious instrument, take thou too the delight of thy own appointed workings."

The Supramental Manifestation, SABCL, Vol. 16, p. 288

had emanated these four Beings, essentially for the creation of the world, witnessed what was happening, and turning to the Supreme she prayed for the remedy and the cure of the evil that had been done.

Then she was given the command to precipitate her Consciousness into this inconscience, her Love into this suffering, and her Truth into this falsehood. And a greater consciousness, a more total love, a more perfect truth than what had been emanated at first, plunged, so to say, into the horror of Matter in order to awaken in it consciousness, love and truth, and to begin the movement of Redemption which was to bring the material universe back to its supreme origin.

So, there have been what might be called "successive involutions" in Matter, and a history of these involutions. The present result of these involutions is the appearance of the Supermind emerging from the inconscience; but there is nothing to indicate that after this appearance there will be no others... for the Supreme is inexhaustible and will always create new worlds.

That is my story.

23 October 1957

Mother begins the reading of the last six chapters of *The Life Divine*.

"A spiritual evolution, an evolution of consciousness in Matter in a constant developing self-formation till the form can reveal the indwelling Spirit, is then the key-note, the central significant motive of the terrestrial existence. This significance is concealed at the outset by the involution of the Spirit, the Divine Reality, in a dense material Inconscience; a veil of Inconscience, a veil of insensibility of Matter hides the universal Consciousness-Force which works within it, so that the Energy, which is the first form the Force of creation assumes in the physical universe, appears to be itself inconscient and yet does the works of a vast occult Intelligence."

The Life Divine, SABCL, Vol. 19, p. 824

I didn't understand, Sweet Mother, what this Consciousness-Force was, so I did not understand anything!

The first thing to understand is precisely this first sentence which states the fact, the *raison d'être* and the very principle of universal existence. You see, we are beginning here at the end of the volume, these are the last six chapters. Throughout the beginning of the book Sri Aurobindo has taken one after another all the theories explaining the how and why of the universe and of existence; he has carried them to their extreme limits in order to explain fully what they mean, and at the end he has shown how far they were incomplete or imperfect and given the true solution. All that is, as it were, finished with; it lies behind our reading. It would have taken us something like ten years to

go through all that! And you would have required all kinds of knowledge and a great intellectual development to be able to follow it with any profit. But for our part, we are beginning from where he has shown, from the purely intellectual point of view, what the purpose of existence is, and he formulates it like this: "the central significant motive of the terrestrial existence." For he is not concerned with the entire universe, he has taken terrestrial life, that is, our life here on Earth, as a symbolic and concentrated representation of the purpose of the entire universe. In fact, according to very old traditions, the Earth, from the deeper spiritual point of view, has been created as a symbolic concentration of universal life so that the work of transformation may be done more easily, in a limited, concentrated "space" — so to say — where all the elements of the problem are gathered together so that, in the concentration, the action may be more total and effective. So here he speaks only of terrestrial existence, but we can understand that it is a symbolic existence, that is, that it *represents* a universal action. It is a symbolic, concentrated representation. And he says that "the central motive", that is, the purpose of terrestrial existence is to awaken, to develop and finally to reveal in a total manifestation the Spirit which is hidden at the centre of Matter and impels this Matter *from within* outwards towards a progressive development which will liberate the Spirit working from within.

So, in the outer appearances as you see them, at first you find the mineral kingdom with stones, earth, minerals which to us, in our outer consciousness, appear absolutely unconscious. Yet, behind this unconsciousness there is the life of the Spirit, the consciousness of the Spirit, which is completely hidden, which is as if asleep — though that is only an appearance — and which works from within in order gradually to transform this Matter that is completely inert in appearance, so that its organisation may lend itself more and more to the manifestation of consciousness. And he says here that at first this veil of inert Matter is so total that, to a superficial glance, it is something

that has neither life nor consciousness. When you pick up a stone and look at it with your ordinary eyes and consciousness, you say, "It has no life, no consciousness." For one who knows how to see behind appearances, there is, hidden at the centre of this Matter — at the centre of *each atom* of this Matter — there is, hidden, the Supreme Divine Reality working from within, gradually, through the millennia, to change this inert Matter into something that is expressive enough to be able to reveal the Spirit within. Then you have the progression of the history of Life: how, from the stone there suddenly appeared a rudimentary life and through successive species a sort of organisation, that is, an organic substance capable of revealing life. But between the mineral and vegetable kingdoms there are transitional elements; one doesn't know whether they belong to the mineral or already to the vegetable kingdom — when one studies this in detail one sees some strange species which belong neither here nor there, which are not quite this and yet not quite that. Then comes the development of the vegetable kingdom where naturally life appears, for there is growth, transformation — a plant sprouts up, develops, grows — and with the first phenomenon of life comes also the phenomenon of decomposition and disintegration which is relatively much more rapid than in the stone: a stone, if protected from the impact of other forces, can last apparently indefinitely, whereas the plant already follows a curve of growth, ascent and decline and decomposition — but this with an extremely restricted consciousness. Those who have studied the vegetable kingdom in detail are well aware that there is a consciousness there. For instance, plants need sunlight to live — the sun represents the active energy which makes them grow — so, if you put a plant in a place where there is no sunlight, you see it always growing up and up and up, trying, making an *effort* to reach the sunlight. In a virgin forest, for instance, where man does not interfere, there is this kind of struggle among all the plants which are always growing straight upwards in one way or another in their *effort* to catch the sunlight. It is very

interesting. But even if you put a flower-pot in a fairly small courtyard surrounded by walls, where the sun doesn't come, a plant which normally is as high as this (*gesture*), becomes as tall as that: it stretches up and makes an *effort* to find the light. Therefore there is a consciousness, a will to live which is already manifesting. And little by little, with species that are more and more developed, you again reach another transitional passage between what is no longer entirely a plant and still not yet an animal. There are several species like that, which are very interesting. There are those plants which are carnivorous, plants like an open mouth: you throw a fly inside, snap! they swallow it. It is no longer quite a plant, it is not yet an animal. There are many plants of this kind.

Then you come to the animal. The first animals, yes, it is difficult to distinguish them from plants, there is almost no consciousness. But there you see all the animal species, you know them, don't you, right up to the higher animals which, indeed, are *very* conscious. They have their own completely independent will. They are very conscious and marvellously intelligent, like the elephant, for instance; you know all the stories about elephants and their wonderful intelligence. Therefore, it is already a very perceptible appearance of mind. And through this progressive development, we suddenly pass on to a species which has probably disappeared — traces of which have been found — an intermediate animal like a monkey or of the same line as the monkey — something close to it, similar, if not the monkey as we know it — but already an animal that walks on two legs. And from there we come to man. There is an entire beginning of the evolution of man; we can't say, can we, that he shows a brilliant intelligence, but there is already an action of the mind, a beginning of independence, of independent reaction to the environment and the forces of Nature. And so, in man there is the whole range, right up to the higher being capable of spiritual life.

That is what Sri Aurobindo tells us on this page.

That is all. Now, if you have a question to ask?...

Sweet Mother, here he says: "This consciousness... reaches its climax of intelligence and exceeds itself in Man...."

Yes, that is what I have just told you: at his highest stage, man begins to be altogether independent of Nature — "altogether" is an exaggeration: he *can* become altogether independent. A man who has realised the spiritual consciousness in himself, who has a direct relation with the divine Origin is literally independent of Nature, of the force of Nature.

(*It begins to rain.*) Ah! That is to cool down our minds! (*Laughter*)

And that is what he calls "exceeding itself", that is, that the Being, the inner divine Consciousness, the supreme spiritual Reality in its effort to develop... (*It rains harder.*) Oh, oh! We shall have to stop talking... in its effort to develop a conscious means of manifesting itself has arrived at a being capable of having a direct contact with It without going through the whole process of Nature.

Now, I think we are going to stop. No meditation, because...

30 October 1957

"This terrestrial evolutionary working of Nature from Matter to Mind and beyond it has a double process: there is an outward visible process of physical evolution with birth as its machinery, — for each evolved form of body housing its own evolved power of consciousness is maintained and kept in continuity by heredity; there is, at the same time, an invisible process of soul evolution with rebirth into ascending grades of form and consciousness as its machinery. The first by itself would mean only a cosmic evolution; for the individual would be a quickly perishing instrument, and the race, a more abiding collective formulation, would be the real step in the progressive manifestation of the cosmic Inhabitant, the universal Spirit: rebirth is an indispensable condition for any long duration and evolution of the individual being in the earth-existence. Each grade of cosmic manifestation, each type of form that can house the indwelling Spirit, is turned by rebirth into a means for the individual soul, the psychic entity, to manifest more and more of its concealed consciousness; each life becomes a step in a victory over Matter by a greater progression of consciousness in it which shall make eventually Matter itself a means for the full manifestation of the Spirit."

The Life Divine, SABCL, Vol. 19, pp. 825–26

It is difficult to understand, Sweet Mother.

Ah!...

If you take terrestrial history, all the forms of life have appeared one after another in a general plan, a general programme, with the addition, always, of a new perfection and a greater

consciousness. Take just animal forms — for that is easier to understand, they are the last before man — each animal that appeared had an additional perfection in its general nature — I don't mean in all the details — a greater perfection than the preceding ones, and the crowning point of the ascending march was the human form which, for the moment, from the point of view of consciousness, is the form most capable of manifesting consciousness; that is, the human form at its height, at the height of its possibilities, is capable of more consciousness than all preceding animal forms.

This is *one* of Nature's ways of evolution.

Sri Aurobindo told us last week that this Nature was following an ascending progression in order to manifest more and more the divine consciousness contained in all forms. So, with each new form that it produces, Nature makes a form capable of expressing more completely the spirit which this form contains. But if it were like this, a form comes, develops, reaches its highest point and is followed by another form; the others do not disappear, but the individual does not progress. The individual dog or monkey, for instance, belongs to a species which has its own peculiar characteristics; when the monkey or the man arrives at the height of its possibilities, that is, when a human individual becomes the best type of humanity, it will be finished; the individual will not be able to progress any farther. He belongs to the human species, he will continue to belong to it. So, from the point of view of terrestrial history there is a progress, for each species represents a progress compared with the preceding species; but from the point of view of the individual, there is no progress: he is born, he follows his development, dies and disappears. Therefore, to ensure the progress of the individual, it was necessary to find another means; this one was not adequate. But within the individual, contained in each form, there is an organisation of consciousness which is closer to and more directly under the influence of the inner divine Presence, and the form which is under this influence — this kind of inner concentration of energy

— has a life independent of the physical form — this is what we generally call the "soul" or the "psychic being" — and since it is organised around the divine centre it partakes of the divine nature which is immortal, eternal. The outer body falls away, and this remains throughout every experience that it has in each life, and there is a progress from life to life, and it is the progress of the *same* individual. And this movement complements the other, in the sense that instead of a species which progresses relative to other species, it is an individual who passes through all the stages of progress of these species and can continue to progress even when the species have reached the limit of their possibilities and... stay there or disappear — it depends on the case — but they cannot go any farther, whereas the individual, having a life independent of the purely material form, can pass from one form to another and continue his progress *indefinitely.* That makes a double movement which completes itself. And that is why each individual has the possibility of reaching the utmost realisation, independent of the form to which he momentarily belongs.

There are people — there used to be and there still are, I believe — who say they remember their past lives and recount what happened when they were dogs or elephants or monkeys, and tell you stories in great detail about what happened to them. I am not going to argue with them, but anyway this illustrates the fact that before being a man, one could have been a monkey — perhaps one doesn't have the power to remember it, that's another matter — but certainly, this inner divine spark has passed through successive forms in order to become more and more conscious of itself. And if it is proved that one can remember the form one had before becoming a psychic being as it is found in the human form, well, one might very well recollect climbing trees and eating coconuts and even playing all sorts of tricks on the traveller passing beneath!

In any case, the fact is there. Perhaps later we shall see that a certain state of inner organisation is necessary for this psychic

being to be able to have memories in the way the mental being has them — we shall speak about it later, when we come to it in the book — but in any case the fact is established: it is this double movement of evolution intersecting and complementing itself which gives the utmost possibilities of realisation to the divine light within each being. This is what Sri Aurobindo has explained. (*Turning to the child*) This means that in your outer body you belong to the animal species in the course of becoming a supramental species — you are not that yet! but within you there's a psychic being which has already lived in many, many, countless species before and carries an experience of thousands of years within you, and which will continue while your human body remains human and finally decomposes.

We shall see later whether this psychic being has the possibility of transforming its body and itself creating an intermediate species between the animal man and superman — we shall study this later — but still, for the moment, it is an immortal soul which becomes more and more conscious of itself in the body of man. There. Now have you understood?

(Another child) *Mother, in Nature we often see the disappearance of an entire species. What is that due to?*

Probably Nature thought that it was not a success!... You see, she throws herself into action with abundance and a total lack of sense of economy. We can see this. She tries everything she can, in every way she can, with all sorts of inventions which are obviously very remarkable, but at times... it's like a blind alley. Pushing forward in that direction, instead of progressing, one would reach things that are absolutely unacceptable. She throws out her creative spirit in an abundance without any calculation, and when the combination is not very successful, well, she just does this (*gesture*) then rejects it; she doesn't mind. For Nature, you see, there is a limitless abundance. I believe she doesn't shrink from any kind of experiment. Only if something has a

chance of leading to a successful issue does it continue. Certainly there have been intermediaries or parallel forms between the ape and man; traces of them have been found — perhaps with some wishful thinking! but anyway, traces have been found — well, those species have disappeared. So, if we like to speculate, we may wonder whether the species which is now to come and which is an intermediary between animal man and superman will remain or whether it will be considered uninteresting and rejected.... That we shall see later. The next time we meet we shall speak about it again!

It is quite simply the activity of a limitless abundance. Nature has enough knowledge and consciousness to act like someone with innumerable and countless elements which can be mixed, separated again, reshaped, taken to pieces once more and... It is a huge cauldron: you stir it, and something comes out; it's no good, you throw it back in and take something else. Imagine the dimension... just take the earth: you understand, one or two forms or a hundred, for her this is of no importance at all, there are thousands and thousands and thousands of them; and then a few years, a hundred, a thousand, millions of years, it is of no importance at all, you have eternity before you!

Simply, when we look at things on the human scale, in space and time, oh! it seems enormous, but for Nature it is nothing. It is just a pastime. One may like it or not, this pastime, but still it is a pastime.

It is quite obvious that Nature enjoys it and is in no hurry. If she is told to press on without stopping and to finish one part of her work or another quickly, the reply is always the same: "But what for, why? Doesn't it amuse you?"

13 November 1957

I have a question about the first page where Sri Aurobindo says, "A spiritual evolution, an evolution of consciousness in Matter in a constant developing self-formation till the form can reveal the indwelling Spirit, is then the key-note, the central significant motive of the terrestrial existence."

The Life Divine, SABCL, Vol. 19, p. 824

So, from the point of view of form, in what way is man superior to other animals?

I think this is quite easy to find.

Sri Aurobindo speaks of the form that is capable of manifesting the Spirit. The very nature of the manifestation of the Spirit is consciousness, understanding and finally mastery. It is obvious that from the point of view of aesthetics and purely physical appearance, one may find certain animal forms beautiful and perhaps even more beautiful than the human form in its present state of... degeneration, I believe. There were periods when the human race seems to have been more beautiful and harmonious; but as a means of expression of the Spirit, its superiority is beyond the shadow of a doubt. For the mere fact that man stands upright is symbolic of the capacity to look at things from above. He dominates what he sees instead of always having his nose to the ground. Of course, it may be said that birds fly, but with wings it is difficult to have a means of intellectual self-expression!

This upright position is very symbolic. If you try to walk on all fours, you will see that this position with the eyes and nose necessarily turned to the ground does not give you the feeling that you are looking at things from another plane or

even from above. The whole structure of the human body is made to express a mental life. The proportions of the brain, for instance, the structure of the human head, the structure of the arms and hands, all that, from the point of view of the expression of the Spirit, is unquestionably altogether superior and it seems to have been conceived and built exclusively *for the purpose of* expressing intelligence.

Certainly from the point of view of strength, of suppleness, of agility, man is not the most gifted of animals, but for expressing the Spirit no other animal can be compared with him. Everything is made with this in view. We may wish to add to this possibility other things which seem to have been sacrificed just for the sake of the mental life — but also precisely because of this capacity of expressing a mental life man is able to develop in himself faculties which are only latent. Man has a power to educate: his body can be developed, educated. He can increase certain faculties. You cannot imagine any animal, even among those we most admire, which is capable, for instance, of physical education, purely physical — I am not speaking of going to school or learning things, but purely physical education, a systematic development of the muscles. The animal is born and makes good use of what it has and it grows according to its own law, but it does not educate itself or does it in a very rudimentary way, in an extremely limited field; whereas by a normal and systematic development man can remedy his defects and shortcomings. Man is certainly, in an organised way, the first progressive animal who can augment his capacities, his possibilities, increase his faculties and acquire things that he did not have spontaneously. There is not one animal which can do that.

Yes, under man's influence some animals have learnt movements they did not make spontaneously, but that is still under man's influence. Certainly without men dogs or horses would never have learnt to do what they have learnt through contact with man. So, it is obvious that the human physical form is

the most appropriate one for expressing the Spirit. It may seem inadequate to us, but precisely we feel we are capable of drawing out from our bodies more than they would have given spontaneously without an educating will. And with this possibility of expressing intelligence, observation, comprehension, deduction — all the mental qualities — man has gradually learnt to understand the laws of Nature and tried not only to understand them but master them.

If we compare what he is with the higher being living in the Truth which we want to become, we may obviously speak about man as he is at present in a very derogatory fashion and complain of his imperfection. But if we put ourselves in the place of the animals which immediately precede him in the evolution, we see that he is endowed with possibilities and powers which the others are quite incapable of expressing. The mere fact of having the ambition, the desire, the will to know the laws of Nature and to master them sufficiently to be able to adapt them to his needs and change them to a certain extent, is something impossible, unthinkable for any animal.

You may tell me that I don't usually speak very kindly about man (*laughter*), but that's because he usually thinks too kindly of himself!

If we compare him with the other products of Nature, unquestionably he is at the top of the ladder.

But, Mother, then the question arises: Does the descent of the consciousness develop the form or is it the development of the form that compels the descent of a higher consciousness?

There would be no universe without the descent of consciousness. Where would your universe begin, and with what?

In the case of man, did the animal man bring down the mind or was it the descent of mind...

Oh! You mean: Is it something in the intermediary being or in the higher ape which by its aspiration called down the mind? But the aspiration itself is the result of a previous descent.

It is quite obvious that nothing can be manifested which is not previously contained in what exists. One can't bring something out of nothing. One can make what is there emerge, manifest, express itself, develop; but if nothing had been there, nothing would ever have come out. All progress, all perfection is the result of an inner effort of "something" that is present and seeks to manifest. That is to say, absolutely, the principle comes first and the expression afterwards. As we go on reading *The Life Divine*, Sri Aurobindo will prove this to you in every possible way. If there were not an eternal principle, if there were not — we give it all the names we like, can't we? — a Supreme Reality, there would never have been a universe, because nothing comes out of nothing.

We shall see this as we read on; then you will have to do philosophical gymnastics. But anyway, even without philosophy and mental gymnastics, it is obvious that to make something, you need to have something to make it with.

There is or was a whole period in the development of the human mind in which men tried very seriously to prove that it was the perfecting of Matter which produced the Spirit. But that is nonsense! (*Mother laughs*). The least of your activities, all that you do, is a clear proof that first you conceive and then you do, even on a very small scale. A life which is not the result of a conscious will would be a completely incoherent life. I mean that if Nature were not a conscious force and a conscious will with a conscious aim, nothing could ever have been organised. We have just to observe a little, even in the very small field of observation we have in our individual life, to be completely convinced of it.

But anyway... It is precisely one of the subjects Sri Aurobindo deals with in great detail, so we shall speak about it again.

(*Silence*)

It could be said that the mastery of fire is the symbolic sign of human superiority. Wherever there is man, a fire is lit.

The two things that are clearly superior to animal activities are the faculty of writing and the possibility of articulate speech. And this is something so clearly superior that all sufficiently developed animals are extremely sensitive to articulate speech; it fascinates them. If you speak in a very clear, very modulated, very well articulated way to a wild animal, it is immediately attracted, truly fascinated — I am not speaking of those which have lived close to man, but precisely of animals which have never met man before. They listen immediately, they feel the superior power that is being expressed.

27 November 1957

"It is open also to doubt whether the evolution is likely to go any farther than it has gone already or whether a supramental evolution, the appearance of a consummated Truth-Consciousness, a being of Knowledge, is at all probable in the fundamental Ignorance of the earthly Nature....

Admitting that the creation is a manifestation of the Timeless Eternal in a Time Eternity, admitting that there are the seven grades of Consciousness and that the material Inconscience has been laid down as a basis for the reascent of the Spirit, admitting that rebirth is a fact, a part of the terrestrial order, still a spiritual evolution of the individual being is not an inevitable consequence of any of these admissions or even of all of them together. It is possible to take another view of the spiritual significance and the inner process of terrestrial existence. If each thing created is a form of the manifest Divine Existence, each is divine in itself by the spiritual presence within it, whatever its appearance, its figure or character in Nature. In each form of manifestation the Divine takes the delight of existence and there is no need of change or progress within it. Whatever ordered display or hierarchy of actualised possibilities is necessitated by the nature of the Infinite Being, is sufficiently provided for by the numberless variation, the teeming multitude of forms, types of consciousness, natures that we see everywhere around us. There is no teleological purpose in creation and there cannot be, for all is there in the Infinite: the Divine has nothing that he needs to gain or that he has not; if there is creation and manifestation, it is for the delight of creation, of manifestation, not for

> *any purpose. There is then no reason for an evolutionary movement with a culmination to be reached or an aim to be worked out and effectuated or a drive towards ultimate perfection."*
>
> *The Life Divine, SABCL, Vol. 19, pp. 826–27*

This is an argument Sri Aurobindo is presenting. As he has said, it is *one* way of looking at the problem and solving it, but that does not mean that this is his own point of view. And this is exactly what he does throughout the book, all the time; he presents different arguments, different points of view, different conceptions, and once he has placed all these problems before us, then he comes and gives the solution. And that is why our method of reading has a drawback, for I read one paragraph to you and if we stop there, it seems as though he had proved his own point of view; and then, if by chance one doesn't remember very well and the next time I read another paragraph in which he expounds another point of view — sometimes totally different, sometimes even opposite — and we stop there, the conclusion is: this too is his point of view. So there is a contradiction. And then if we continue, there are two or three contradictions! I am telling you this because I have heard people who read in a rather superficial way and perhaps also don't read continuously enough — people who consider themselves extremely intelligent and learned — who have told me, "But Sri Aurobindo repeats himself all the time in this book! He tells us the same thing again in almost every paragraph." (*Mother laughs*) For he presents all other points of view, then gives his own, the conclusion; then once again he presents every point of view, gives all the problems, and ends up by proving the truth of what he wants to teach us — so he "repeats himself"!

After all, of course, one has only to read attentively enough to avoid falling into this trap. One must be careful, not come to a conclusion in the middle of a subject, not say to oneself, "Ah, look! Sri Aurobindo says it is like that." He does not say it is

"like that", he tells you there are *some people* who say it is like that. And he shows you the problem as it is presented by many people, and then once again the same problem as presented by other people; and only when he has finished explaining to us all the points of view does he give his own conclusion. And what is exceedingly interesting is that his conclusion is always a synthesis: all the other points of view find their place provided they are properly arranged. This excludes nothing, it combines everything and synthesises all points of view.

But as we have a lesson every three weeks, we have time (*laughing*) to forget all we have read before! I don't know if you can remember the problem that was set?... No?...

Is there or is there not an individual evolution?... There is a universal evolution — Sri Aurobindo has shown this — but within this universal evolution, is there or is there not an individual evolution?... Now, he has given us one theory — which holds together perfectly, which is quite logical, you see — but in which it is not at all necessary to postulate an individual evolution. The whole universal plan is logical, can be logically proved, without introducing the necessity of an individual evolution.

But if we continue with patience, in a little while he will prove to us why and how this notion of individual evolution must be introduced into the system of explanation that will be chosen. But what I should like to know is whether this problem has any reality for you or not — whether it corresponds to something you understand or not. If you have followed that, it is possible to conceive of a progressive, evolving universe, in which the individual is not necessarily evolving individually...

I must ask you questions to find out whether you understand first of all the difference between universal and individual evolution, and how both can proceed.

How does Nature proceed in its universal evolution? I think, you have understood this, haven't you?

One dies and is born again.... Physically, isn't it that?

Yes, I am speaking of the outer world, the physical world as we see it.

One dies and is born...

No, that is something else. What you say — dying and being born again, dying and being reborn — that is the process of individual evolution, provided that something of the individual persists through life and death, for if he died entirely and disintegrated entirely, what could be reborn? Necessarily something must persist — persist through the rebirths — otherwise it is no longer the same person. If nothing persists, it is not the individual who progresses, it is Nature. Nature makes use of matter; with this matter she produces forms — I am telling you this in an oversimplified way, but still — she has at her disposal a mass of matter and she makes combinations; she makes a form, then this form develops, but it disintegrates, it does not persist as an individual element. Why doesn't it persist? Because Nature needs matter, substance to make other forms. So she unmakes what she has made, then out of this she makes something else, and she continues in this way, and this could go on indefinitely without the individual progressing: the *whole* progresses.

Supposing you have some plasticine — you know plasticine for modelling, don't you? Good. You make a form, then when you have finished, you don't like it, so you break it up and make it into a paste again and try another form. You have made some progress, you try, you arrange; you say, "That didn't work, I am going to try this", and your form is a little better but it is still not what you want; so once again you break it, put some water, make a paste and then begin another form. And you can go on indefinitely. It is always the same substance but not the same being, for each one of your forms has its own particular existence as a form, and the moment you break it, nothing is left.

You may try to perfect the same form or try other forms; you may try, for instance, to make a dog or a horse, and then if

you have not succeeded, you may begin again and make another horse or dog, but you may also begin something else. If you build a house and don't like your house, you demolish it and build another on another model, but nothing is left of the first house except the memory, if you want to keep it. In the same way, Nature begins with completely unconscious and amorphous matter, then tries one form and another; only, instead of doing as we would, one thing at a time, she makes millions of them all at once. But it is simply a matter of scale, it is because Nature has more means at her disposal, that is all. But that does not necessarily imply that there is something permanent — like a principle of life or a principle of consciousness — which enters into a form and persists when this form is broken to enter into another. It could simply be as you with your plasticine: you make something, unmake it, make it again, unmake it again, indefinitely, and there is nothing left — as I said — except the memory of what was made before. But if we admit individual evolution, there is something permanent which passes from one form to another and, with each new form, makes a new progress and becomes capable of entering into a higher form, more and more, until this "something" becomes a perfectly conscious being at the end of the evolution. Then this being would have a personal evolution which would duplicate — it won't be independent but simultaneous — and complement the evolution of Nature or rather *make use of* the evolution of Nature as a field for its own individual evolution.... Do you catch it this time? Good!

What Sri Aurobindo has presented here is the explanation of a world which would function quite logically and comprehensibly without any need of an individual being passing from one form into another, without anything permanent which would be free from all destruction, all death, which would persist through all its forms and would itself have a personal, individual progression *parallel* to the evolution of Nature.... It is as though in the form you have made, at the centre there were a little precious

stone which you had placed there and wanted to cover with successive forms. You transfer your little precious stone from one form to another — and the comparison is still incomplete, for the precious stone becomes more and more precious as it passes from one object to another — and it would be as though, by passing from one form to another, it became more and more luminous and pure, and more and more clear-cut in form.

There. Do you understand or not?

A little.

A little. Ah! That's already something.

So, to round it off, do you think there is an individual evolution or not?... Do you have any experience of it?... And how could you have the experience? That would become interesting. How can individual evolution be experienced apart from the collective evolution of Nature?

Can you give the answer?

Unless one is conscious of the principle that is eternal in oneself, how can one know whether...

Ah! Good, that's good. That is all right, but then it amounts to asking you if you are conscious of this eternal principle which is in your being!

(*Silence*)

Are you going to look and see if you can find it within you?

Why is it so hidden?

Perhaps simply because one does not give it enough attention! If one took the trouble to open the doors, perhaps one would find it.... It is obviously a gentleman who does not like — a

gentleman or a lady or something, or anything — which does not like ostentation, does not force itself on your attention at the surface. But perhaps it is waiting for you to go in search of it? Perhaps it is sitting very quietly, at the very back of the house, and you must open the doors one after another.

I don't find that it is hidden. I find it visible everywhere, all the time, at every moment, in all things.

Shall we look? Shall we go and look?

(*Meditation*)

4 December 1957

"In fact we see that the principles of creation are permanent and unchanging: each type of being remains itself and does not try nor has any need to become other than itself; granting that some types of existence disappear and others come into being, it is because the Consciousness-Force in the universe withdraws its life-delight from those that perish and turns to create others for its pleasure. But each type of life, while it lasts, has its own pattern and remains faithful with whatever minor variations to that pattern: it is bound to its own consciousness and cannot get away from it into other-consciousness; limited by its own nature, it cannot transgress these boundaries and pass into other-nature. If the Consciousness-Force of the Infinite has manifested Life after manifesting Matter and Mind after manifesting Life, it does not follow that it will proceed to manifest Supermind as the next terrestrial creation. For Mind and Supermind belong to quite different hemispheres, Mind to the lower status of the Ignorance, Supermind to the higher status of the Divine Knowledge. This world is a world of the Ignorance and intended to be that only; there need be no intention to bring down the powers of the higher hemisphere into the lower half of existence or to manifest their concealed presence there; for, if they are at all existent here, it is in an occult incommunicable immanence and only to maintain the creation, not to perfect it. Man is the summit of this ignorant creation; he has reached the utmost consciousness and knowledge of which he is capable: if he tries to go farther, he will only revolve in larger cycles of his own mentality. For that is the curve of his existence here, a finite circling which

> *carries the Mind in its revolutions and returns always to the point from which it started; Mind cannot go outside its own cycle, — all idea of a straight line of movement or of progress reaching infinitely upward or sidewise into the Infinite is a delusion. If the soul of man is to go beyond humanity, to reach either a supramental or a still higher status, it must pass out of this cosmic existence, either to a plane or world of Bliss and Knowledge or into the unmanifest Eternal and Infinite."*
>
> *The Life Divine, SABCL, Vol. 19, pp. 827–28*

In fact, you should do a little preparatory work and note down the new idea in each new paragraph, adding it to the preceding ideas so that at the end of the chapter you have the complete picture; for if you ask me a question now about what I have just read, this question may require an answer that is sometimes almost contradictory to what we have seen in the previous paragraph. That comes from his way of going about the proof. It is as though Sri Aurobindo were putting himself at the centre of a kind of sphere, at the centre of a wheel the spokes of which end in a circumference. And he always goes back to his starting-point and goes all the way out to the surface, and so on, which gives the impression that he repeats the same thing several times, but it is simply the exposition of the thought so that one can follow it. One must have a very clear memory for ideas to really understand what he says.

I am emphasising this because, unless you proceed systematically, you won't derive much benefit from this reading; it will appear to you like a maze where it is very difficult to find one's way.... All the ideas are joined at the centre, and at the circumference they go in altogether different directions.

Have you any questions this time?... No.

It is difficult, isn't it? I read and I see quite well that it is difficult to ask a question, for until one has come to the end of the proof, one doesn't know what he is leading up to or

what he wants to teach; and at the same time, if one were to read the whole exposition, it would be impossible — unless one has a specially faithful memory — to recall all the points. Before reaching the end one would have forgotten what is written at the beginning! It would be rather interesting to take notes, brief notes, to try to summarise each paragraph in one or two key-ideas so as to be able to compare them.

(*Silence*)

Sri Aurobindo says here that each species is satisfied with the particular characteristics of that species, the principles of its structure, and does not try to transform or change itself into a new species. The dog remains satisfied with being a dog, the horse with being a horse and never tries, for instance, to become an elephant! Starting from this Sri Aurobindo asks the question: Will man remain satisfied with being man or will he awaken to the necessity of being something other than man, that is, a superman?

That is the summary of the paragraph.

But when one is used to such expositions, if one has a speculative mind, and one reads this, something in the being is not satisfied. That is to say, this concerns only the most external form, that kind of crust of the being, but within oneself one feels "something" which has, on the contrary, a sort of imperative tendency to go beyond that form. And this is what Sri Aurobindo wants to bring home to us.

I have seen pet animals which truly had a sort of inner *need* to become something other than what they were. I knew dogs which were like that, cats, horses and even birds like that. The outer form was inevitably what it was, but there was something living and perceptible in the animal which was making an obvious effort to achieve another expression, another form. And every man who has gone beyond the stage of the animal man and become the human man truly has what I might call an

"incorrigible" need to be something other than this thoroughly unsatisfactory semi-animal — unsatisfactory in its expression, its means of expression and its means of life. So the problem is this: Will this imperious need be effective enough in its aspiration for the form itself, the species, to develop and transform itself, or will it be only this thing, this imperishable consciousness in the being, which will leave this form when it perishes to enter into a higher form which, besides, as far as we can see now, does not yet exist?

And the problem before us is: How will this higher form be created? If we consider the problem, it becomes very interesting. Is it by some process which we have to imagine, that this form will gradually transform itself in order to create a new one, or is it by some other means, a means still unknown to us, that this new form will appear in the world?

That is, will there be a continuity or will there be a sudden appearance of something new? Will there be a progressive transition between what we now are and what our inner spirit aspires to become, or will there be a break, that is, shall we be obliged to drop this present human form and wait for the appearance of a new form — an appearance the process of which we do not foresee and which will have no relation with what we are now? Can we hope that this body which is our present means of earthly manifestation, will have the possibility of transforming itself progressively into something which will be able to express a higher life, or will it be necessary to give up this form entirely to enter into another which does not yet exist on Earth?

That is the problem. It is a very interesting problem.

If you will reflect on it, it will lead you to a little more light.

We can reflect on it just now.

(*Meditation*)

When this talk was first published, Mother added the following remarks:

Why not both?

Both will be there at the same time; the one does not exclude the other.

Yes, but will one be transformed into the other?

One will be transformed and will be like a rough outline of the other. And the other, the perfect one, will appear when this one comes into being. For both have their beauty and their purpose, therefore they will both be there.

The mind always tries to choose — but it's not like that. Even all that we can imagine is much less than what will be. Truly speaking, everyone who has an intense aspiration and an inner certitude will be called upon to realise it.

Everywhere, in all the fields, always, eternally, everything will be possible. And everything that is possible, everything will exist at a given moment — a given moment that will be more or less delayed, but everything will exist.

Just as all sorts of possibilities have been found between the animals and man, possibilities which have not remained, so there will be all sorts of possibilities: each individual will try in his own way. And all this together will help to prepare the future realisation.

The question might be asked: Will the human species be like some species which have disappeared from the earth?... Certain species have disappeared from the earth — but not species which have lasted as long as the human species. I don't think so; and certainly not the species which had in them the seed of progress, this possibility of progress. Rather one has the impression that evolution will follow a curve which will draw closer and closer to a higher species and, maybe, everything that is still too close to the lower species will fall away, just as those species have.

We always forget that not only is everything possible — everything, even the most contradictory things — but all the possibilities have at least one moment of existence.

11 December 1957

"Even if it be discovered hereafter that under certain chemical or other conditions Life makes its appearance, all that will be established by this coincidence is that in certain physical circumstances Life manifests, not that certain chemical conditions are constituents of Life, are its elements or are the evolutionary cause of a transformation of inanimate into animate Matter. Here as elsewhere each grade of being exists in itself and by itself, is manifested according to its own character by its own proper energy, and the gradations above or below it are not origins and resultant sequences but only degrees in the continuous scale of earth-nature."

The Life Divine, SABCL, Vol. 19, p. 829

Sweet Mother, how did the first man appear?

Sri Aurobindo says here,[1] precisely, that if we take the scientific point of view, we see that theories follow one another with great instability, and seem more like a kind of series of imaginations than things which can be proved — if one takes the purely materialist point of view. People believe that because it is a materialist point of view, it is the easiest to prove, but quite obviously it is the most difficult. If we take the occult standpoint, there have been traditions, based perhaps on certain memories, but as they are altogether beyond any material proof, this knowledge is considered to be even more problematic than scientific imaginations

[1] "...if the facts with which Science deals are reliable, the generalisations it hazards are short-lived; it holds them for some decades or some centuries, then passes to another generalisation, another theory of things. This happens even in physical Science where the facts are solidly ascertainable and verifiable by experiment...."

The Life Divine, SABCL, Vol. 19, p. 828

and deductions. For any inner logic, it is easier to understand and admit, but one has no more proof than one has material proof that there was *one* first man or that there were several first men or that there was something which was not yet a man but almost a man. These are speculations.

Traditions — which of course are only oral traditions and from the scientific point of view quite questionable, but which are based on individual memories — say that the first man or the first human pair or the first human individuals were materialised in accordance with an occult method, something like the one Sri Aurobindo foretells for the future supramental process; that is, that beings belonging to higher worlds have, by a process of concentration and materialisation, built or formed for themselves bodies of physical matter. It probably wasn't the lower species which progressively produced a body which became the first human body.

According to spiritual and occult knowledge, consciousness precedes form; consciousness by self-concentration produces its form; whereas, according to the materialist idea, it is form which precedes consciousness and makes it possible for consciousness to manifest. For those who have some knowledge of the invisible worlds and a direct perception of the play of forces, there is no possible doubt: it is *necessarily* consciousness which produces a form in order to manifest. Now, the way things are arranged on earth, it is quite certainly a consciousness of a higher order which penetrates a form and helps to transform it, so that this form may become — either immediately or through successive generations — capable of manifesting that consciousness. For those who have the inner vision and knowledge, this is absolutely beyond doubt. It is impossible for it to be otherwise. But those who start from the other end, from below, will not admit it — but all the same it is not for ignorance to dictate knowledge to wisdom! And yet, this is what it does at present. As it is easier to doubt than to know, the human mind is accustomed to doubt everything; that is its first movement, and of course that is why it knows nothing.

Conception precedes manifestation and expression, that is quite certain. And all those who have had a direct contact with the past have the memory of a kind of human prototype, far superior to mankind at present, who came on earth as an example and a promise of what humanity will be when it reaches its acme.

(*Silence*)

There is in life a certain tendency to imitate, a sort of effort to copy "something". One can find very striking examples of this in animal life — it even begins already in plant life, but in animal life it is very striking. One could give numerous examples. And so, in that sense, one might very well conceive of a sort of effort of animal life to attempt to copy, to imitate, to create some resemblance to this ideal type which would be manifested on earth by occult means, and it was probably through successive attempts, by a more and more successful effort that the first human types were produced.

18 December 1957

Mother reads a paragraph from *The Life Divine*, (SABCL, Vol. 19, p. 829).

The only really important thing modern science has discovered is that from the purely outer and physical point of view things are not what they seem to be. When you look at a body, a human being, an object, a landscape, you perceive these things with the help of your eyes, your touch, hearing and, for the details, smell and taste; well, science tells you: "All that is illusory, you don't see things at all as they are, you don't touch them as they really are, you don't smell them as they really are, you don't taste them as they really are. It is the structure of your organs which puts you in contact with these things in a particular way which is entirely superficial, external, illusory and unreal."

From the point of view of science, you are a mass of — not even of atoms — of something infinitely more imperceptible than an atom, which is in perpetual movement. There is absolutely nothing which is like a face, a nose, eyes, a mouth; it is only just an appearance. And scientists come to this conclusion — like the uncompromising spiritualists of the past — that the world is an illusion. That is a great discovery, very great.... One step more and they will enter into the Truth. So, when somebody comes and says, "But I *see* this, I *touch* it, I *feel* it, I am sure of it", from the scientific point of view it's nonsense. This could be said only by someone who has never made a scientific study of things as they are. So, by diametrically opposite roads they have come to the same result: the world as you see it is an illusion.

Now what is the truth behind this? People who have sought spiritual knowledge tell you, "We have experienced it", but of course it is a purely subjective experience; there are as yet no grounds on which one can say absolutely that the experience is

beyond question for everybody. Everyone's experience is beyond question for him. And if one takes it a little further...

In fact, the value of an experience or a discovery could perhaps be proved by the power it gives, the power to change these appearances and transform things, circumstances and the world as it appears to us, in accordance with the will that manifests through that experience. It seems to me that the most universal proof of the validity of an individual or collective experience would be its power to make things — these appearances that we call the world — different from what they are. From the subjective point of view, the effect of the experience on an individual consciousness is an undeniable proof; for one who attains bliss, sovereign peace, unchanging delight, the profound knowledge of things, it is more than proved. The effects on the outer form depend on many other things besides the experience itself — depend perhaps on the first cause of these experiences — but out of all this, *one* thing seems to be a proof which is accessible to other people as well as to the one who has the experience; it is the power over other people and things — which for the ordinary consciousness is "objective". For instance, if a person who has attained the state of consciousness I am speaking about, had the power of communicating it to others, it would be partially — only partially — a proof of the reality of his experiences; but further, if the state of consciousness in which he is — for instance, a state of perfect harmony — could create this harmony in the outer world, in what apparently is not harmony, it would be, I think, the proof most readily accepted, even by the materialist scientific mind. If these illusory appearances could be changed into something more beautiful, more harmonious, happier than the world we live in now, this would perhaps be an undeniable proof. And if we take it a little farther, if, as Sri Aurobindo promises us, the supramental force, consciousness and light transform this world and create a new race, then, just as the apes and animals — if they could speak — could not deny the existence of man, so too man would not be able to deny the

existence of these new beings — provided that they are different enough from the human race for this difference to be perceptible even to the deceptive organs of man.

From these deductions it would seem that the most conclusive and obvious aspect and the one which will probably be the first to manifest — probably — will be the aspect of Power, rather than the aspect of Joy or of Truth. For a new race to be founded on earth, it would necessarily have to be protected from other earthly elements in order to be able to survive; and power is protection — not an artificial power, external and false, but the true strength, the triumphant Will. It is therefore not impossible to think that the supramental action, even before being an action of harmonisation, illumination, joy and beauty, might be an action of power, to serve as a protection. Naturally, for this action of power to be truly effective, it would have to be founded on Knowledge and Truth and Love and Harmony; but these things could manifest, visibly, little by little, when the ground, so to say, has been prepared by the action of a sovereign Will and Power.

But for the least of these things to be possible, there must first be a basis of *perfect* balance, the balance given by a total absence of egoism, a perfect surrender to the Supreme, the true purity: identification with the Supreme. Without this basis of perfect balance, the supramental power is dangerous, and one must *on no account* seek it or want to pull it down, for even in an infinitesimal quantity it is so powerful and so formidable that it can unbalance the entire system.

Since I am speaking to you about it, I would like to recommend something to you. In your desire for progress and your aspiration for realisation, take great care not to attempt to pull the forces towards you. Give yourself, open yourself with as much disinterestedness as you can attain through a constant self-forgetfulness, increase your receptivity to the utmost, but *never* try to *pull* the Force towards you, for wanting to pull is already a dangerous egoism. You may aspire, you may open

yourself, you may give yourself, but never seek to take. When things go wrong, people blame the Force, but it is not the Force that is responsible: it is ambition, egoism, ignorance and the weakness of the vessel.

Give yourself generously and with a perfect disinterestedness and from the deeper point of view nothing bad will ever happen to you. Try to take and you will be on the brink of the abyss.

Questions and Answers
1958

1 January 1958

O Nature, material Mother,
Thou hast said that thou wilt collaborate
and there is no limit
to the splendour of this collaboration.

New Year Message, 1 January 1958

Sweet Mother, will you explain the message for this year?

It is already written! The explanation has already been written, it is ready for the *Bulletin* of February 21.[1]

There is nothing to explain. It is an experience, something that happened, and when it happened I noted it down, and as it turned out, it occurred just at the moment when I remembered that I had to write something for the year — which was next year at that time, that is, the year which begins today. When I remembered that I had to write something — not because of that, but simultaneously — this experience came, and when I noted it down, I realised that it was... it was the message for this year!

(*Silence*)

I will tell you only one thing: you should not misinterpret the meaning of this experience and imagine that from now on everything is going to take place without any difficulties and always in a manner that favours our personal desires. It is not on this plane. It does not mean that when we do not want it to rain, it will not rain! that when we want something to happen in the world, it will happen immediately; that all difficulties will be

[1] The text of this explanation is given in an appendix to this talk.

done away with and everything will be as it is in fairy-tales. It is not that. It is something much deeper: Nature, in her play of forces, has accepted the new Force which has manifested and included it in her movements. And as always, the movements of Nature are on a scale which is infinitely beyond the human scale and not visible to an ordinary human consciousness. It is an inner, psychological possibility which has come into the world rather than a spectacular change in earthly events.

I am saying this because you might be tempted to believe that fairy-tales were going to be realised on earth. It is not yet time for that.

(*Silence*)

One must have much patience and a very wide and very complex vision to understand how things happen.

(*Silence*)

The miracles which take place are not what could be called story-book miracles, in the sense that they don't happen as in stories. They are visible only to a very deep vision of things — very deep, very comprehensive, very vast.

(*Silence*)

One must already be capable of following the methods and ways of the Grace in order to recognise its action. One must already be capable of not being blinded by appearances in order to see the deeper truth of things.

We could usefully, this evening, just take this resolution: to try throughout the year to do our best, so that the time may not pass in vain.

Appendix

Explanation of the New Year Message of 1 January 1958

In the course of one of our classes[1] I spoke of the limitless abundance of Nature, the inexhaustible creatrix who takes the multitude of forms and mixes them together, separates them again and remoulds them, unmakes and destroys them, to move on to ever new combinations. It is a huge cauldron, I said: she stirs things inside and brings out something; it's no good, she throws it in again and takes something else.... One or two forms or a hundred have no importance for her, there are thousands and thousands of forms, and then as for years, a hundred years, a thousand, millions of years, it is of no importance, you have eternity before you! It is quite obvious that Nature enjoys all this and that she is not in a hurry. If she is told to rush rapidly through and finish this or that part of her work quickly, the reply is always the same: "But why should I do so, why? Doesn't it amuse you?"

The evening I told you about these things, I identified myself totally with Nature, I joined in her game. And this movement of identification provoked a response, a sort of new intimacy between Nature and myself, a long movement of a growing closeness which culminated in an experience which came on the eighth of November.

Suddenly Nature understood. She understood that this new Consciousness which has just been born does not seek to reject her but wants to embrace her entirely, she understood that this new spirituality does not turn away from life, does not recoil in fear before the formidable amplitude of her movement, but wants on the contrary to integrate all its facets. She understood

[1] 30 October 1957.

that the supramental consciousness is here not to diminish but to complete her.

Then from the supreme Reality came this order, "Awake, O Nature, to the joy of collaboration." And the whole of Nature suddenly rushed forward in a great surge of joy, saying, "I accept, I shall collaborate." And at the same time, there came a calm, an absolute tranquillity so that the bodily vessel could receive and contain, without breaking, without losing anything, the mighty flood of this Joy of Nature which rushed forward as in a movement of gratitude. She accepted, she saw with all eternity before her that this supramental consciousness was going to fulfil her more perfectly, give a still greater strength to her movement, a greater amplitude, more possibilities to her play.

And suddenly I heard, as if they came from all the corners of the earth, those great notes one sometimes hears in the subtle physical, a little like those of Beethoven's Concerto in D-major, which come in moments of great progress, as though fifty orchestras had burst forth all in unison, without a single false note, to express the joy of this new communion between Nature and Spirit, the meeting of old friends who come together again after having been separated for so long.

Then these words came, "O Nature, Material Mother, thou hast said that thou wilt collaborate and there is no limit to the splendour of this collaboration."

And the radiant felicity of this splendour was sensed in perfect peace.

That is how the message for the new year was born.

8 January 1958

Mother reads a paragraph from *The Life Divine*.

We have decided to read paragraph by paragraph so that we can go into certain detailed explanations, but this method has one drawback: as I have already told you, it is that Sri Aurobindo takes up all the theories and expounds them in all their details, with all their arguments, in order to show later what their defects are and their inability to solve the problem, and to present his own solution; but (*laughing*), when we stop in the middle of an argument and take a single paragraph, if we read this paragraph without going on to the very end, we may very well imagine or believe that he is giving his own opinion.

In fact there are some unscrupulous people who have done that, and when they wanted to prove that their own theories were correct, they quoted paragraphs from Sri Aurobindo without saying what went before or what came after, in support of their own theory. They said, "You see, Sri Aurobindo in *The Life Divine* has written that." He has written that, but that does not mean that it was his own way of seeing. And now we are facing the same difficulty. For the last two lessons, I think, I have been reading the detailed demonstration of one of the modern theories of life, evolution, the purpose of existence — or the purposelessness of existence — and Sri Aurobindo presents this in quite a... conclusive way, as if it were his own theory and own way of seeing. We stop in the middle and are left with a kind of uneasiness and the feeling, "But that is not what he told us! How is it that he is expounding that to us now?..." It is quite a big drawback. But if I were to read to you the whole argument, when we came to the end you wouldn't remember the beginning and you wouldn't be able to follow! So the best thing is to go on quietly, one paragraph at a time, trying to understand what

he is saying, but without thinking that he wants to prove to us that it is true. He simply wants to expound the theories with everything that supports them, without telling us that this is the best way of seeing things.

In reality, you should take this reading as an opportunity to develop the philosophical mind in yourself and the capacity to arrange ideas in a logical order and establish an argument on a sound basis. You must take this like dumb-bell exercises for developing muscles: these are dumb-bell exercises for the mind to develop one's brain. And you must not jump to hasty conclusions. If we wait with patience, at the end of the chapter he will tell us — and tell us on a basis of irrefutable argument — why he has come to the conclusion he arrives at.

Now, if there is anything that gives rise to a question...

Not in the text, Mother.

Something else? What?

Mother, we sometimes have sudden ideas. Where do they come from and how do they work in the head?

Where do they come from? — From the mental atmosphere.

Why do they come?... Perhaps you meet them on your way as one meets a passer-by in a public square. Most often it is that; you are on a road where ideas are moving about and it so happens that you meet this particular one and it passes through your head. Obviously, those who are in the habit of meditating, of concentrating, and for whom intellectual problems have a very concrete and tangible reality, by concentrating their minds they attract associated ideas, and a "company of ideas" is formed which they organise so as to solve a problem or clarify the question they are considering. But for this, one must have the habit of mental concentration and precisely that philosophical mind I was speaking about, for which ideas are living entities with their

own life, which are organised on the mental chess-board like pawns in a game of chess: one takes them, moves them, places them, organises them, one makes a coherent whole out of these ideas, which are individual, independent entities with affinities among themselves, and which organise themselves according to inner laws. But for this, one must also have the habit of meditation, reflection, analysis, deduction, mental organisation. Otherwise, if one is just "like that", if one lives life as it comes, then it is exactly like a public square: there are roads and on the roads people pass by, and then you find yourself at cross-roads and it all passes through your head — sometimes even ideas without any connection between them, so much so that if you were to write down what passes through your head, it would make a string of admirable nonsense!

We once said that we could usefully try out a little game: to ask somebody suddenly, "What are you thinking about?" Well, it is not often that he can answer you clearly, "Ah! I was just thinking of that particular thing." If he says that, you may infer that he is a thoughtful person. Otherwise, the usual spontaneous reply is, "Oh! I don't know."

You see, all those who have done ordered and organised physical exercises, have the knowledge, for instance, of the various muscles which must be moved to obtain a particular movement, and the best way to move them and how to obtain the maximum result with the minimum loss of energy. Well, it is the same thing with thought. When you train yourself methodically, there comes a time when you can follow a train of reasoning quite objectively, as you would project a picture on a screen — you can follow the logical deduction of one idea from another, and the normal, logical, organised movement, with the minimum loss of time, from a proposition to its conclusion. Once you have acquired the habit of doing that, just as you have the habit of methodically moving the muscles which must be moved to obtain a certain result, your thought becomes clear. Otherwise, movements of thought, intellectual movements, are

vague, imprecise, elusive; all of a sudden something rises up, one doesn't know why, and something else comes to contradict it, one doesn't know why either. And if one tries to organise this clearly in order to become aware of the exact relation between ideas, the first few times one does it, one gets a fine headache! And one has the feeling of trying to find one's way in a very dark virgin forest.

The speculative mind needs discipline for its development. If it is not disciplined methodically, one is always in a sort of a cloud. The vast majority of human beings can harbour the most contradictory ideas in their brains without being in the least troubled by them.

Well, until you try to organise your mind clearly, you risk at the very least having no control over what you think. And very often, you must come down to action before you begin to realise the value of what you think! Or, if not as far as action, at least as far as the feelings: suddenly you become aware that you have feelings which are not very desirable; then you realise you have not controlled your way of thinking at all.

Sweet Mother, do people have bad thoughts because they have no control over their minds?

Bad thoughts?.... There can be several reasons for that. In fact there are several reasons. It may be due to a bad nature — if people have nasty feelings, these nasty feelings can be the cause of nasty thoughts. It may be the opposite. Perhaps they are wide open to all sorts of suggestions from outside and, as I said, these suggestions enter them and gradually create nasty feelings. It may be due to subconscious influences which are conflicting precisely because they are uncontrolled. When these influences rise to the surface, instead of being controlled and those which are undesirable refused, everything is allowed to enter as it likes, the doors are open.

You are *bathed* in all kinds of things — good, bad, neutral,

luminous, dark; it's all there, and each one's consciousness should, in principle, act as a filter. You should receive only what you want to receive, you should think only what you want to think; and then, you should not allow these thoughts to be changed into feelings and actions without formal authorisation.

In fact, this is the very purpose of physical existence. Each person is an instrument for controlling a certain set of vibrations which represent his particular field of work; each one must receive only the ones which are in conformity with the divine plan and refuse the rest.

But not one in a thousand does that. You do it a little, half consciously, due to the friction of circumstances and surroundings, but as for doing it deliberately, surely there are very few human beings who do it deliberately; and even when it's done deliberately, to do it in the true way and with the true knowledge, that indeed is still more exceptional.

Thought-control! Who can control his thoughts? Only those who have trained themselves to it, who have tried hard since their childhood.

There is the whole range, you see, from total lack of control, which for most people comes to this: it is their thoughts which rule them and not they their thoughts. The vast majority of people are troubled by thoughts they cannot get rid of, which literally possess them, and they don't have the power to close the door of their active consciousness to these thoughts. Their thoughts govern them, rule them. You hear people saying every day, "Oh! That thought, all the time it comes back to me, again and again, and I can't get rid of it!" So they are assailed by all kinds of things, from anxiety to ill-will and fear. Thoughts which express dread are extremely troublesome; you try to send them away, they return like a rubber band and fall back on you. Who has control? It requires years of labour and such a long practice. And so, to come to something which is not complete control but anyway already represents a stage: to have the ability to do this in your head (*Mother moves her hand across her brow*), to annul

all the movements, to stop the vibrations. And the mental surface becomes smooth. Everything stops, as when you open a book at a blank page — but almost materially, you understand... blank!

Try a little when you are at home, you will see, it is very interesting.

And so, one follows the place in one's head where the little point is dancing. I have seen — I have seen Sri Aurobindo doing this in somebody's head, somebody who used to complain of being troubled by thoughts. It was as if his hand reached out and took hold of the little black dancing point and then did this (*gesture with the finger-tips*), as when one picks up an insect, and he threw it far away. And that was all. All still, quiet, luminous.... It was clearly visible like this, you know, he took it out without saying anything — and it was over.

And things are very closely interdependent: I also saw the case when someone came to him with an acute pain somewhere: "Oh, it hurts here! Oh, it hurts! Oh!..." He said nothing, he remained calm, he looked at the person, and I saw, I saw something like a subtle physical hand which came and took hold of the little point dancing about in disorder and confusion, and he took it like this (*same gesture*) and there, everything had gone.

"Oh, oh! Look my pain has gone."

There.

15 January 1958

> Mother reads a paragraph from *The Life Divine* continuing arguments from the point of view that each type of being, including man, is fixed in its type and does not progress, and that if a new creation is intended, it cannot develop out of man (SABCL, Vol. 19, p. 832).

If all these arguments were true and there were to be no higher realisation... there would be nothing left to do. But fortunately this is not true.

Only, Sri Aurobindo has said many times that there will be no irrefutable proof of the truth of what he has said and predicted until it is accomplished; only when everything is accomplished will those who refuse to believe be obliged to recognise their mistake — but perhaps they won't be there to do it!

So there is only one thing to do: to proceed on one's way keeping one's own faith and certitude, and to pay no heed to contradictions and denials.

There are people who need the support and trust and certitude of others to feel comfortable and to be at ease — they are always unhappy because, of course, they will always come across people who do not believe, and so they will be upset and it will trouble them. One must find one's certitude within oneself, keep it in spite of everything and go one's way whatever the cost, to the very end. The Victory is for the most enduring.

To maintain one's endurance in spite of all oppositions, the support must be unshakable, and *one* support *alone* is unshakable, that of the Reality, the Supreme Truth.

It is useless to look for any other. This is the only one that never fails.

22 January 1958

Mother reads a passage from *The Life Divine* which concludes the exposition of the intellectual arguments against the appearance of a higher species.

Next time we begin the argument. All these arguments take place in a field where you don't usually go, do you? It is a domain which is unfamiliar to you.

In fact it is a very special domain, far removed from action or any practical realisation. It has always seemed to me that one could take up any idea at all and use it as the starting-point for an argument and through intellectual logic succeed in proving that this idea is altogether true, simply by the power of argumentation.

It is quite remarkable that these are two fields of human activity — action and speculation — which usually find it difficult to be together at the same time in the consciousness; and it is even unusual that a man with a highly developed speculative mind should ever be a man of action, and on the other hand, that a man of action should ever feel at ease in the speculative intellect.

When one has an essentially practical bent for accomplishing things, one always feels that all these speculations, arguments, deductions are a more or less interesting occupation for idle people. But... I dare not say this too loud, for it is not appreciated by intellectuals, this has always seemed to me a gymnastic exercise that's very interesting from the point of view of mental development, but without much practical result. Now, if you listen to people with an abstract turn of mind, they will tell you that physical gymnastics are a thoroughly futile occupation without any practical result: "What's the use of doing gymnastics? It is simply to exercise your muscles. And why should we

not exercise our mental muscles as you exercise the muscles of your body?" And both arguments are of equal value.

For me the solution lies elsewhere.

(*Long silence*)

As soon as one is convinced that there is a living and real Truth seeking to express itself in an objective universe, the only thing that seems to have any importance or value is to come into contact with this Truth, to identify oneself with it as perfectly as possible, and to no longer be anything but a means of expressing it, making it more and more living and tangible so that it may be manifested more and more perfectly. All theories, all principles, all methods are more or less good according to their capacity to express that Truth; and as one goes forward on this path, if one goes beyond all the limits of the Ignorance, one becomes aware that the *totality* of this manifestation, its wholeness, its integrality is necessary for the expression of that Truth, that *nothing* can be left out, and perhaps that there is nothing more important or less important. The one thing that seems necessary is a harmonisation of everything which puts each thing in its place, in its true relation with all the rest, so that the total Unity may manifest harmoniously.

If one comes down from this level, according to me one no longer understands anything and all arguments are of equal worth in the narrowness and limitation which take away all their real value.

Each thing in its place, in harmony with all the rest, and then one can begin to understand and to live.

(*Silence*)

One feels that a single movement, however small it may be, however insignificant it may seem, which is in harmony with that Truth, is of more value than the most wonderful arguments.

Let one single drop of light shine in you and it will be more effective in dissolving the darkness than the most beautiful speeches in the world on what light is or on what it can do.

29 January 1958

> *"Even in the Inconscient there seems to be at least an urge of inherent necessity producing the evolution of forms and in the forms a developing Consciousness, and it may well be held that this urge is the evolutionary will of a secret Conscious-Being and its push of progressive manifestation the evidence of an innate intention in the evolution.... Truth of Being inevitably fulfilling itself would be the fundamental fact of the evolution, but Will and its purpose must be there as part of the instrumentation, as an element in the operative principle."*
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> *The Life Divine, SABCL, Vol. 19, p. 834*

Sweet Mother, I did not understand the last part of the sentence.

What don't you understand? He says that evolution is the result of the inevitable fulfilment of the Truth of Being which is the essential reality of the universe. The fulfilment of this Truth, the fulfilment of the Truth of Being, is the fundamental fact of evolution, that is, it is the cause and principle of the evolution; but naturally, if this Truth of Being is inevitably fulfilled, it must be by means of a will and a purpose. There has to be an aim and the will to fulfil that aim.

To fulfil itself this truth must contain a will to fulfilment and an aim, a purpose, a project it wants to fulfil. In order to accomplish something, one must have the will to do it, and to have the will to do it, one must know what one wants to do. If one doesn't know what one wants to do, one can't do it. First one must *know*, have a plan, a purpose, a programme if you like; one must know what one wants to do, and then one must *will* to do it, and then one can do it.

You see, he says: the universe is the evolutionary fulfilment of the truth of the universal Being. The deploying of the universe is the progressive, evolutionary fulfilment of the truth of the universal Being, but for this truth to be fulfilled it must necessarily contain a plan, that is, it must know what it wants to do and must have the will to do it.

When you do something you know what you want to do, don't you? And then you will to do it, otherwise you couldn't. But it is the same thing, this is what he says.

It must necessarily be admitted that there is a plan in the universe, that it is not something that comes about by chance, and that there is a Will to fulfil this plan, otherwise nothing could happen. You see, Sri Aurobindo contradicts those who say that the universe has no plan and no will. But the minute we admit that there is a consciousness — a conscious existence — behind the universe, we admit at the same time, automatically, that there is a plan in this universe and a will to fulfil this plan. That is all he says. It is simple, isn't it?

You only have to reduce this to the individual scale. When someone is conscious and does something consciously, he necessarily does it knowing what he wants to do, with a plan. For instance, when you prepare a programme for the anniversary of your "boarding", you have a purpose, don't you? — you want to make a programme for the anniversary, and so you have a plan, you choose what you are going to enact and how it is going to be enacted, and at the same time you *want* to do it, otherwise you would not do it — so, Sri Aurobindo says just that. That is, that if the universe is a conscious entity, if there is a Consciousness which expresses itself, it necessarily expresses itself in accordance with a plan and with a will to express itself — it is quite simple.

Have you understood?... A little!

Don't you know this, that in order to do something one must know what one wants to do and then one must do it, have the will to do it? Even if you decide to walk from here to there,

you must decide that you want to walk from here to there, and afterwards you must have the will to walk, otherwise you would not move. No?

Yes.

Ah! it is nothing but that, it is as simple as that.

(*Silence*)

People usually do things so automatically and spontaneously, without watching themselves doing them, that if they were to ask themselves how it comes about, they would require some time before the process becomes conscious to them. You are so used to living that you don't even know how it happens. All the gestures and movements of life are made spontaneously, automatically, almost unconsciously, in a semi-conscious state, and one doesn't even realise this very simple fact that in order to do something, one must first know what one is going to do and then must want to do it. It is only when something goes wrong with one of these elements — for instance, the ability to make a plan in one's mind and the ability to carry out this plan — when these two begin to go wrong, one starts worrying about whether one's being is in good order. For example, if one morning on waking up in bed you did not know or remember that you had to get up, wash and dress, have your breakfast, do this and that, you would say to yourself, "Why, what's the matter? Something is wrong — I don't know what I ought to do any more; something must be out of order."

And if, later, knowing what you have to do — you must get up, go for your bath, dress — you know you have to do it but you can't do it: there is something, the stimulus of the will, which is no longer working, has no effect on the body; then once again you begin to feel anxious, you say, "Well, well, could I be ill by any chance?"

Otherwise you are not even aware that the whole of life is like that. It seems quite natural to you, it is "like that". That means that you act in a way which is hardly semi-conscious; it is automatic, it is a kind of spontaneous habit and you don't watch what you are doing. And so, if you want to have some control over your movements, the first thing is to know what is happening.

And in fact, this perhaps is the reason why things don't always go well. For if they went according to a normal, usual rhythm, one would never be conscious of what one is doing; one would do it by habit, automatically, spontaneously, without thinking, and would not watch what one is doing, and so one would never be able to acquire self-mastery. It would be "something", a vague consciousness in the background expressing itself without your even watching what you are doing, and which would make you act; and then if there came along some strange or unknown current of force, it could make you do anything at all, without your even noticing the process by which it makes you act. And in fact that is what does happen.

It is only when one is fully conscious of the process, when one knows how life works, the movement of life and the process of life, that one can begin to have control; otherwise at first one doesn't even think at all of having any control; but if unpleasant things occur, if, for instance, you do something which has unfortunate consequences and you tell yourself, "Oh! But I should stop doing that", then, at that moment, you realise that there is a whole technique of "how to live" which is necessary to be able to control your life! Otherwise one is a kind of more or less coordinated medley of actions and reactions, of movements and impulses, and one doesn't know at all how things happen. This is what is developed in the being by shocks, frictions, all the apparent disorders of life, and what forms the consciousness in very small children. A small child is altogether unconscious, and only gradually, very gradually, does he begin to grow aware of things. But unless they take special care, people live almost

their whole life without even knowing how they do it! They are not aware of it.

So anything at all can happen.

But that is the *very first little step* towards becoming conscious of oneself in the material world.

You have vague thoughts and feelings, don't you, which develop more or less logically in the being — rather less than more — then you have a faint impression of that; and again, when you get burnt, you realise that something is wrong, when you fall and hurt yourself, you realise that something is wrong: it begins to make you reflect that you must pay attention to this and that, so as not to fall, not to burn yourself, not to cut yourself.... It dawns on you gradually with external experience, external contacts. But otherwise one is a half-conscious mass which moves without even knowing why or how.

This is the very small beginning of the emergence from the primary state of unconsciousness.

5 February 1958

"The metaphysical objection [to a teleological cosmos] is more serious; for it seems self-evident that the Absolute can have no purpose in manifestation except the delight of manifestation itself: an evolutionary movement in Matter as part of the manifestation must fall within this universal statement; it can be there only for the delight of the unfolding, the progressive execution, the objectless seried self-revelation. A universal totality may also be considered as something complete in itself; as a totality, it has nothing to gain or to add to its fullness of being. But here the material world is not an integral totality, it is part of a whole, a grade in a gradation; it may admit in it, therefore, not only the presence of undeveloped immaterial principles or powers belonging to the whole that are involved within its Matter, but also a descent into it of the same powers from the higher gradations of the system to deliver their kindred movements here from the strictness of a material limitation. A manifestation of the greater powers of Existence till the whole being itself is manifest in the material world in the terms of a higher, a spiritual creation, may be considered as the teleology of the evolution. This teleology does not bring in any factor that does not belong to the totality; it proposes only the realisation of the totality in the part. There can be no objection to the admission of a teleological factor in a part movement of the universal totality, if the purpose, — not a purpose in the human sense, but the urge of an intrinsic Truth-necessity conscious in the will of the indwelling Spirit, — is the perfect manifestation there of all the possibilities inherent in the total movement. All exists here, no doubt, for the delight of existence, all is

a game or Lila; but a game too carries within itself an object to be accomplished and without the fulfilment of that object would have no completeness of significance. A drama without denouement may be an artistic possibility, — existing only for the pleasure of watching the characters and the pleasure in problems posed without a solution or with a forever suspended dubious balance of solution; the drama of the earth evolution might conceivably be of that character, but an intended or inherently predetermined denouement is also and more convincingly possible. Ananda is the secret principle of all being and the support of all activity of being: but Ananda does not exclude a delight in the working out of a Truth inherent in being, immanent in the Force or Will of being, upheld in the hidden self-awareness of its Consciousness-Force which is the dynamic and executive agent of all its activities and the knower of their significance."

The Life Divine, SABCL, Vol. 19, pp. 834–35

If one wants to state the problem in a way that's more easily accessible to ordinary practical thinking, one could conceive that everything exists from all eternity, and therefore simultaneously, but that this total, simultaneous, eternal existence is like the property, the possession of a Consciousness which would take pleasure in travelling through its domains, find its joy in an almost infinite or anyway indefinite journey throughout all its domains, and would go like this from discovery to discovery of things which already exist, which have always existed... but which the Supreme had never visited. And the path he follows in his discovery could be an entirely free, unexpected, unforeseen path according to his choice of the moment, so that, although his whole domain is there from all eternity, existing for ever, he could visit it in an altogether unexpected, unpredictable way, and so open the door to all relationships and possibilities.

And it is also his own self-discovery, for this domain is

himself; and a discovery which could be made according to immediate decisions, without a preconceived plan such as would be mentally thought out, with all the delight of complete freedom and of the unexpectedness of every second — an eternal journey within his own being.

Everything is absolutely determined, for everything *is* from all eternity, and yet the path traversed has a freedom and unpredictability which is also absolute.

And this is how there can exist simultaneously worlds which have no apparent relationship with each other, and which nevertheless coexist, but are discovered gradually and so give the impression of a new creation.... Seeing things in this way, one could easily understand that simultaneously with this physical world as we know it with all its imperfections, all its limitations, all its ignorance, there are one or several other worlds which exist in their own zones and are so different in nature from ours here, that for us they are as if non-existent, for we have no relation with them. But the moment the great eternal Voyage passes from this world to that, by the very fact of this passage of the eternal Consciousness, the link will necessarily be created, and the two worlds will gradually enter into relation with each other.

Truly speaking this is what is actually happening, and we can say with certainty that the supramental world already exists, but the time has come for it to become the object of the journey of the supreme Consciousness, and then, gradually, a conscious link will be formed between this world and that, and they will have a new relation as a result of this new orientation of the journey.

This explanation is as good as any other and perhaps it is easier to understand for people who are not metaphysicians.... At least, I like it!

Mother, you said that everything was absolutely determined; then where does personal effort come from?

I told you just a moment ago that the Great Traveller chooses at each instant the course of his journey, therefore it is an absolute freedom of choice, and this is what gives the universal unfolding that unpredictable air and that possibility of change, for the Supreme is entirely free to change his course if he wants to do so. On the contrary, this is absolute freedom. But everything is there, and since everything is there, everything is absolutely determined — it has always existed but it is discovered in an altogether unforeseen way. And in this discovery lies freedom.

You are taking a walk and, suddenly, well, you feel like going this way instead of that, so the course you take is completely new, but in the places you are going to, the things were already there, they existed and were therefore determined — but not your discovery.

Surely only a consciousness identified with the supreme Consciousness can have this feeling of absolute freedom. So long as you are not one with the supreme Consciousness, you necessarily have the impression or the feeling or idea that you are subject to the law of a higher Will, but the moment you are identified with this Will you are perfectly free.

This amounts to saying what Sri Aurobindo has always said: in union with the Supreme true freedom is realised.

12 February 1958

Mother, since in each new life the mind and vital as well as the body are new, how can the experiences of past lives be useful for them? Do we have to go through all the experiences once again?

That depends on people!

It is not the mind and vital which develop and progress from life to life — except in altogether exceptional cases and at a very advanced stage of evolution — it is the psychic. So, this is what happens: the psychic has alternate periods of activity and rest; it has a life of progress resulting from experiences of the physical life, of active life in a physical body, with all the experiences of the body, the vital and the mind; then, normally, the psychic goes into a kind of rest for assimilation where the result of the progress accomplished during its active existence is worked out, and when this assimilation is finished, when it has absorbed the progress it had prepared in its active life on earth, it comes down again in a new body bringing with it the result of all its progress and, at an advanced stage, it even chooses the environment and the kind of body and the kind of life in which it will live to complete its experience concerning one point or another. In some very advanced cases the psychic can, before leaving the body, decide what kind of life it will have in its next incarnation.

When it has become an almost completely formed and already very conscious being, it presides over the formation of the new body, and usually through an inner influence it chooses the elements and the substance which will form its body in such a way that the body is adapted to the needs of its new experience. But this is at a rather advanced stage. And later, when it is fully formed and returns to earth with the idea of service, of collective

help and participation in the divine Work, then it is able to bring to the body in formation certain elements of the mind and vital from previous lives which, having been organised and impregnated with psychic forces in previous lives, could be preserved and, consequently, can participate in the general progress. But this is at a very, very advanced stage.

When the psychic is fully developed and very conscious, when it becomes a conscious instrument of the divine Will, it organises the vital and the mind in such a way that they too participate in the general harmony and can be preserved.

A high degree of development allows at least some parts of the mental and vital beings to be preserved in spite of the dissolution of the body. If, for instance, some parts — mental or vital — of the human activity have been particularly developed, these elements of the mind and vital are maintained even "in their form" — in the form of the activity which has been fully organised — as, for example, in highly intellectual people who have particularly developed their brains, the mental part of their being keeps this structure and is preserved in the form of an organised brain which has its own life and can be kept unchanged until a future life so as to participate in it with all its gains.

In artists, as for instance in certain musicians who have used their hands in a particularly conscious way, the vital and mental substance is preserved in the form of hands, and these hands remain fully conscious, they can even use the body of living people if there is a special affinity — and so on.

Otherwise, in ordinary people in whom the psychic form is not fully developed and organised, when the psychic leaves the body, the mental and vital forms may persist for a certain time if the death has been particularly peaceful and concentrated, but if a man dies suddenly and in a state of passion, with numerous attachments, well, the different parts of the being are dispersed and live for a shorter or longer time their own life in their own domain, then disappear.

The centre of organisation and transformation is always

the presence of the psychic in the body. Therefore, it is a very big mistake to believe that the progress continues or even, as some believe, that it is more complete and rapid in the periods of transition between two physical lives; in general, there is no progress at all, for the psychic enters into a state of rest and the other parts, after a more or less ephemeral life in their own domain, are dissolved.

Earthly life is the place for progress. It is here, on earth, that progress is possible, during the period of earthly existence. And it is the psychic which carries the progress over from one life to another, by organising its own evolution and development itself.

19 February 1958

Mother reads her comments upon an experience she had on February 3:

Between the beings of the supramental world and men, almost the same separation exists as between men and animals. Some time ago I had the experience of identification with animal life, and it is a fact that animals do not understand us; their consciousness is so constructed that we elude them almost entirely. And yet I have known pet animals — cats and dogs, but especially cats — that used to make an almost yogic effort of consciousness to reach us. But usually, when they see us as we live and act, they do not understand, they do not *see* us as we are and they suffer because of us. We are a constant enigma to them. Only a very tiny part of their consciousness has a link with us. And it is the same thing for us when we try to look at the supramental world. Only when the link of consciousness is established shall we see it — and even then only the part of our being which has undergone transformation in this way will be able to see it as it is — otherwise the two worlds would remain apart like the animal and human worlds.

The experience I had on the third of February is a proof of this. Before that I had had an individual subjective contact with the supramental world, whereas on the third of February I moved in it concretely, as concretely as I once used to walk in Paris, in a world *that exists in itself*, outside all subjectivity.

It is like a bridge being thrown between the two worlds. Here is the experience as I dictated it immediately afterwards:

(*Silence*)

The supramental world exists permanently and I am there

permanently in a supramental body. I had the proof of this even today when my earth-consciousness went there and remained there consciously between two and three o'clock in the afternoon. Now, I know that what is lacking for the two worlds to unite in a constant and conscious relation, is an intermediate zone between the physical world as it is and the supramental world as it is. This zone remains to be built, both in the individual consciousness and the objective world, and it is being built. When I used to speak of the new world which is being created, it was of this intermediary zone that I was speaking. And similarly, when I am on this side, that is, in the field of the physical consciousness, and I see the supramental power, the supramental light and substance constantly penetrating matter, it is the construction of this zone which I see and in which I participate.

I was on a huge boat which was a symbolic representation of the place where this work is going on. This boat, as large as a city, is fully organised, and it had certainly already been functioning for some time, for its organisation was complete. It is the place where people who are destined for the supramental life are trained. These people — or at least a part of their being — had already undergone a supramental transformation, for the boat itself and everything on board was neither material nor subtle-physical nor vital nor mental — it was a supramental substance. This substance was of the most material supramental, the supramental substance which is closest to the physical world, the first to manifest. The light was a mixture of gold and red, forming a uniform substance of a luminous orange. Everything was like that — the light was like that, the people were like that — everything had that colour, although with various shades which made it possible to distinguish things from each other. The general impression was of a world without shadows; there were shades but no shadows. The atmosphere was full of joy, calm, order; everything went on regularly and in silence. And at the same time one could see all the details of an education, a training in all fields, by which the people on board were being prepared.

This immense ship had just reached the shore of the supramental world and a first group of people who were destined to become the future inhabitants of this supramental world were to disembark. Everything had been arranged for this first landing. At the wharf several very tall beings were posted. They were not human beings, they had never been men before. Nor were they the permanent inhabitants of the supramental world. They had been delegated from above and posted there to control and supervise the landing. I was in charge of the whole thing from the beginning and all the time. I had prepared all the groups myself. I stood on the boat at the head of the gangway, calling the groups one by one and sending them down to the shore. The tall beings who were posted there were inspecting, so to say, those who were landing, authorising those who were ready and sending back those who were not and who had to continue their training on board the ship. While I was there looking at everybody, the part of my consciousness which came from here became extremely interested; it wanted to see and recognise all the people, see how they had changed and check which ones were taken immediately and which ones had to remain to continue their training. After a while, as I stood there observing, I began to feel that I was being pulled back so that my body might wake up — a consciousness or a person here — and in my consciousness I protested, "No, no, not yet, not yet! I want to see the people!" I was seeing and noting everything with intense interest.... Things continued in this way until suddenly the clock here began to strike three, and this brought me back violently. There was a sensation of suddenly falling into my body. I came back with a shock because I had been called back very suddenly, but with all my memory. I remained quiet, without moving, until I could recollect the whole experience and keep it.

On the boat the nature of objects was not the one we know on earth; for instance, clothes were not made of cloth and what looked like cloth was not manufactured: it formed a part of the body, it was made of the same substance which took different

forms. It had a kind of plasticity. When a change had to be made, it took place, not by any artificial and external means but by an inner operation, an operation of consciousness which gave form or appearance to the substance. Life created its own forms. There was *one single* substance in everything; it changed the quality of its vibration according to need and use.

Those who were sent back for fresh training were not of a uniform colour, it was as if their body had greyish, opaque patches of a substance resembling earthly substance; they were dull, as if they had not been entirely permeated with light, not transformed. They were not like that everywhere, only in places.

The tall beings on the shore were not of the same colour, at least they did not have that orange tint; they were paler, more transparent. Except for one part of their body, one could only see the outline of their form. They were very tall, they seemed not to have any bones and could take any form according to their need. Only from the waist down had they a permanent density, which was not perceptible in the rest of their body. Their colour was much lighter, with very little red, it was more golden or even white. The parts of whitish light were translucent; they were not positively transparent but less dense, more subtle than the orange substance.

When I was called back and while I was saying "Not yet", each time I had a brief glimpse of myself, that is, of my form in the supramental world. I was a mixture of the tall beings and the beings aboard the ship. My upper part, particularly the head, was only a silhouette whose contents were white with an orange fringe. Going down towards the feet, the colour became more like that of the people on the boat, that is, orange; going upwards, it was more translucent and white and the red grew less. The head was only a silhouette with a sun shining within it; rays of light came from it which were the action of the will.

As for the people I saw on board the ship, I recognised them all. Some were from here, from the Ashram, some came from elsewhere, but I know them too. I saw everybody but as

I knew that I would not remember them all when I returned, I decided not to give any names. Besides, it is not necessary. Three or four faces were very clearly visible, and when I saw them, I understood the feeling I had here on earth when looking into their eyes: there was such an extraordinary joy.... People were mostly young, there were very few children and they were about fourteen or fifteen, certainly not below ten or twelve — I did not remain long enough to see all the details. There weren't any very old people, apart from a few exceptions. Most of the people who went ashore were middle-aged, except a few. Already, before this experience, some individual cases had been examined several times at a place where people capable of being supramentalised were examined; I had a few surprises and noted them; I even told some people about it. But the ones whom I put ashore today, I saw very distinctly; they were middle-aged, neither young children nor old people, apart from a few rare exceptions, and that corresponded fairly well with what I expected. I decided not to say anything, not to give any names. As I did not remain until the end, it was not possible for me to get an exact picture; the picture was not absolutely clear or complete. I do not want to say things to some and not to others.

What I can say is that the point of view, the judgment, was based *exclusively* on the substance of which the people were made, that is, whether they belonged completely to the supramental world, whether they were made of that very special substance. The standpoint taken is neither moral nor psychological. It is probable that the substance their bodies were made of was the result of an inner law or inner movement which at that time was not in question. At least it is quite clear that the values are different.

When I came back, simultaneously with the recollection of the experience I knew that the supramental world is permanent, that my presence there is permanent, and that only a missing link was necessary for the connection to be made in the consciousness and the substance, and it is this link which is now being forged. I

had the impression — an impression which remained for quite a long time, almost a whole day — of an extreme relativity — no, not exactly that: the impression that the relation between this world and the other completely changed the standpoint from which things should be evaluated or appraised. This standpoint had nothing mental about it and it gave a strange inner feeling that lots of things we consider good or bad are not really so. It was very clear that everything depended on the capacity of things, on their aptitude in expressing the supramental world or being in relation with it. It was so completely different, sometimes even altogether contrary to our ordinary appraisal. I recollect one little thing which we usually consider to be bad; how strange it was to see that in truth it was something excellent! And other things we consider to be important have in fact absolutely no importance at all: whether a thing is like this or like that is not at all important. What is very obvious is that our appraisal of what is divine or undivine is not right. I even laughed to see certain things.... Our usual feeling of what is antidivine seems artificial, seems based on something that's not true, not living — besides, what we call life here did not seem living to me compared with that world — anyway, this feeling should be founded on our relation between the two worlds and on how things make the relation between them easier or more difficult. This would make a great difference in our appraisal of what brings us nearer to the Divine or what separates us from Him. In people too I saw that what helps them to become supramental or hinders them from it, is very different from what our usual moral notions imagine. I felt how... ridiculous we are.

(*End of the February 3 experience*)

(*Mother speaks to the children*:) There is a continuation of this, a kind of consequence in my consciousness of the experience of third February, but it seemed a little premature to read it now. It will appear later in the April issue,[1] following this.

[1] *Bulletin*: April 1958. The text is given in an appendix to this talk.

One thing — I must insist on this — seems to me at the moment to be the most essential difference between our world and the supramental world — and it is only after having gone there consciously, with the consciousness which normally operates here, that this difference has become apparent to me in all its enormity, so to say — everything here, except what goes on within, very deep within, seemed to me absolutely artificial. None of the values of the ordinary physical life are based on truth. And just as to clothe ourselves we have to obtain some cloth and sew clothes to put on when we want to wear them, so too to feed ourselves we need to take things from outside and put them inside our bodies in order to be nourished. In everything our life is artificial.

A true, sincere, spontaneous life like the one in the supramental world, is a springing forth of things from the action of the conscious will, a power over substance which makes it harmonise with what we decide should be. And one who has the power and the knowledge can obtain what he wants, whereas one who does not have them has no artificial means of getting what he desires.

In ordinary life, *everything* is artificial. According to the chance of birth or circumstance, you have a higher or lower position or a more or less comfortable life, not because it is the spontaneous, natural, sincere expression of your way of being and your inner need, but because chance circumstances in life have brought you in contact with these things. An absolutely worthless man may be in a very high position and a man with a marvellous ability to create and organise may find himself toiling in an absolutely limited and inferior situation, whereas he would be a completely useful person if the world were sincere.

This artificiality, this insincerity, this complete lack of truth became so shockingly apparent to me that... one wonders how, in so false a world, we can have any true evaluations.

But instead of making you sad, morose, rebellious, dissatisfied, there is rather the feeling of what I was saying at the

end, of something so laughably ridiculous that for several days I was seized with uncontrollable laughter when I saw things and people! — an uncontrollable laughter, absolutely inexplicable except to myself, at the ridiculousness of things.

When I invited you to a journey into the unknown, a journey of adventure, I did not know I was so close to the truth, and I can promise those who are ready to attempt the adventure that they will make very interesting discoveries.

Appendix

A few days after the experience of February 3, Mother had other experiences which were a kind of continuation of the first one:

Each person carries with himself in his atmosphere what Sri Aurobindo calls the "Censors"; they are in a way permanent delegates of the adverse forces. Their role is to criticise mercilessly every act, every thought, the slightest movement of the consciousness, and to bring you face to face with the most hidden springs of your actions, to bring to light the slightest vibration of a lower kind accompanying what seem to be your purest and highest thoughts and acts.

This is not a question of morality. These gentlemen are not moralising agents although they know very well how to make use of morality! And when they are dealing with a scrupulous conscience, they can harass it without mercy, whispering to it at every minute, "You should not have done this, you should not have done that, you should have done this thing instead, said that thing; now you have spoilt everything, committed an irreparable mistake; see how everything is irretrievably lost now through your fault." They may even take possession of some people's consciousness: you chase away the thought, and there! it comes back two minutes later; you chase it away again and it is still there, all the time hammering away at you.

Every time I meet these gentlemen I welcome them, for they compel you to be absolutely sincere, they track down the most subtle hypocrisy and make you at every moment face your most secret vibrations. And they are intelligent! — their intelligence infinitely surpasses ours: they know everything, they know how to turn against you the least thought, the least argument, the least action, with a truly wonderful subtlety. Nothing escapes

them. But what gives a hostile tinge to these beings is the fact that they are first and foremost defeatists. They always paint the picture for you in the darkest colours; if need be they distort your own intentions. They are truly instruments of sincerity. But they always forget one thing, deliberately, something that they cast far behind as if it did not exist: the divine Grace. They forget prayer, that spontaneous prayer which suddenly springs up from the depths of the being like an intense call, and brings down the Grace and changes the course of things.

And each time you have made some progress, have passed on to a higher level, they make you face once again all the acts of your past life, and in a few months, a few days or a few minutes, they make you go through all your exams once again at a higher level. And it is not enough to brush the thought aside and say, "Oh! I know", and throw a little cloak over it so as not to see. You must face it and conquer, keep your consciousness full of light, without the least tremor, without a word, without the slightest vibration in the cells of the body — and then the attack melts away.

But our ideas of good and evil are so ridiculous! So ridiculous is our notion of what is close to the Divine or far from the Divine! The experience I had the other day, on the third of February, was for me revelatory, I came out of it completely changed. I suddenly understood very many things from the past, actions, parts of my life which had remained inexplicable — in truth, the shortest way from one point to another is not the straight line that men imagine it is!

And all the time the experience lasted, one hour — one hour of that time is long — I was in a state of extraordinary joyfulness, almost in an intoxicated state.... The difference between the two states of consciousness is so great that when you are in one, the other seems unreal, like a dream. When I came back what struck me first of all was the futility of life here; our little conceptions down here seem so laughable, so comical.... We say that some people are mad, but their madness is perhaps a great wisdom,

from the supramental point of view, and their behaviour is perhaps nearer to the truth of things — I am not speaking of the obscure mad men whose brains have been damaged, but of many other incomprehensible mad men, the luminous mad: they have wanted to cross the border too quickly and the rest has not followed.

When one looks at the world of men from the supramental consciousness, the predominant feature is a feeling of strangeness, of artificiality — of a world that is absurd because it is artificial. This world is false because its material appearance does not at all express the deeper truth of things. There is a kind of disconnection between the appearance and what is within. In this way, a man with a divine power in the depths of his being may find himself in the position of a slave on the external plane. It is absurd! In the supramental world, on the other hand, it is the will which acts directly on the substance and the substance is obedient to this will. You want to cover yourself: the substance you live in immediately takes the form of a garment to cover you. You want to go from one place to another: your will is enough to transport you without needing any conveyance, any artificial device. Thus, the boat in my experience had no need of any mechanism to move it; it was the will which modified the substance according to its needs. When it was time to land, the wharf took shape of itself. When I wanted to send the groups ashore, those who were to land knew it automatically without my having to say a word, and they came up in turn. Everything went on in silence, there was no need to speak to make oneself understood; but the silence itself on board the ship did not give that impression of artificiality it does here. Here, when one wants silence, one must stop talking; silence is the opposite of sound. There the silence was vibrant, living, active and comprehensive, comprehensible.

The absurd thing here is all the artificial means one must use. Any idiot at all has more power if he has more means to acquire the necessary artifices; whereas in the supramental world, the

more conscious one is and the more in touch with the truth of things, the more authority does the will have over substance.

The authority is a true authority. If you want a garment you must have the power to make it, a real power. If you do not have this power, well, you remain naked. No device is there to make up for the lack of power. Here, not once in a million times is authority an expression of something true. Everything is formidably stupid.

When I came down again — "came down", it's a way of speaking, for it is neither above nor below, neither inside nor outside; it is... somewhere — it took me some time to readjust myself. I even remember saying to someone, "Now we are going to fall back into our usual stupidity." But I have understood many things and come back from there with a definitive force. Now I know that our way of evaluating things down here, our petty morality, has no relation with the values of the supramental world.

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* *

These surface things have nothing dramatic about them. They seem to me more and more like soap-bubbles, especially since the third of February.

There are people who come to me in despair, in tears, in what they call terrible psychological suffering; when I see them like this, I slightly shift the needle in my consciousness which contains you all, and when they go away they are completely comforted. It is just like a compass needle; one shifts the needle a little in the consciousness and it is all over. Of course, it comes back later, out of habit. They are nothing but soap-bubbles.

I have known suffering also, but there was always a part of myself which knew how to stand behind, apart.

The only thing in the world which still seems intolerable to me now, is all the physical deterioration, the physical suffering, the ugliness, the inability to express that capacity for beauty

which is in every being. But that too will be conquered one day. There too the power will come one day to shift the needle a little. Only, we must rise higher in consciousness: the deeper one wants to go down into matter, the higher is it necessary to rise in consciousness. That will take time. Sri Aurobindo was surely right when he spoke of a few centuries.

26 February 1958

Sweet Mother, you have often spoken about the powers of the sun but you have never said anything about the moon or the stars.

From what point of view? Symbolically?

Yes, Mother.

That depends on the schools of thought, the periods, the countries.... In a general way, the moon is associated with spiritual force, spiritual progress, spiritual aspiration.

The waxing moon used to be considered as the symbol of spiritual aspiration for transformation, and spiritual plenitude was symbolised by the full moon. Moonlight has always been considered to be very favourable to visions, to poetic inspiration and all other-worldly activity. There are all kinds of stories and legends about the stars — stars which appeared on the day a divine being was born.... But all that is a rather literary kind of symbolism.

There is a fairly widespread belief that stars have a special influence on the destiny of men, to the extent that an entire system of knowledge is founded on this and, according to the different positions of the stars in the sky, it makes quite complete predictions about what will happen in your lifetime.

At an elementary stage of thought, this is expressed by saying that the stars have an influence on our lives. It seems more logical and true to think that it is a sort of notation or recording of the destiny of an individual, for, in the universal unity, everything is interrelated and, if you know how to read the relations between the individual and the universal, you may find in the universal positions of the stars a kind of diagram

representing symbolically the life of one individual or another.

Experience proves that this notation which is called in astrology a horoscope is not something absolute and that this destiny is not inevitable, for by taking up yoga and developing spiritually, one escapes from the absolute law of these horoscopes. This would be a kind of notation on the material plane of the relations between universal and individual life, and these relations can be altered by the introduction of a higher plane of consciousness into the material plane of consciousness.

All this is what might be called a half-knowledge, which is a kind of very primitive attempt to grasp the links of interdependence between universal and individual existence. And all these things are much more like languages which enable us to fix a certain half-elaborated knowledge rather than absolute rules or the notation of indisputable facts. They are attempts, endeavours to understand things as they are, but very incomplete attempts — which have a certain attraction for some minds but which are after all only very rough approximations to the truth of things.

If we go deep enough into mental human knowledge, we realise that all this knowledge as we have it externally in the mental consciousness is scarcely anything more than a language — a fairly complicated one — making it possible for us to understand each other but corresponding only very remotely to the truth of things.

There is a direct approach by identity which is much more effective and, so to say, gives you the concrete key to the whole machinery of things, a direct key that needs no complicated science to express itself — something that corresponds to movements of consciousness and will, which would not need all the mental complications to express themselves. Then the universal reality in its totality becomes a symbol and can be directly perceived in its essence.

5 March 1958

Mother, won't you please speak to us about the "reversal" you have already mentioned to us several times? You said that a reversal was necessary to obtain the new consciousness.

A reversal?

What kind of reversal do we need, now? You said "a reversal of consciousness".

That is a way of speaking. It doesn't mean that you should walk on your head!... It is an image.

Yes, Sri Aurobindo has said this too,[1] *so...*

So, if the image leads you to some kind of perception, it is good, but it is not with this (*Mother points to the head*) that you can understand. If it gives you an impression which explains things to you or makes you understand them better, it is all right, but

[1] "The necessary condition for the change from the normal animal to the human character of existence would be a development of the physical organisation which would capacitate a rapid progression, a reversal or turnover of the consciousness, a reaching to a new height and a looking down from it at the lower stages, a heightening and widening of capacity which would enable the being to take up the old animal faculties with a larger and more plastic, a human intelligence, and at the same time or later to develop greater and subtler powers proper to the new type of being, powers of reason, reflection, complex observation, organised invention, thought and discovery.... Such a reversal has been made in each radical transition of Nature: Life-Force emerging turns upon Matter, imposes a vital content on the operations of material Energy while it develops also its own new movements and operations; Life-Mind emerges in Life-Force and Matter and imposes its content of consciousness on their operations while it develops also its own action and faculties; a new greater emergence and reversal, the emergence of humanity, is in line with Nature's precedents; it would be a new application of the general principle."
The Life Divine, SABCL, Vol. 19, pp. 838 – 39

it is not with many words and by going through the brain that you will understand them better.

It is this kind of sensation one has of seeing things in an altogether different way — then one speaks of reversal. It is like... it is always compared with a prism: if you look at it from one side, the light is white, and if you turn it over, it splits up into all its elements. This is something similar.

Words are not good and useful unless through a special grace they put you into contact with the Thing, but in themselves they have no value.

In fact, the ideal condition — which has already been partially realised by some people — is to transmit the essential idea and even something that is higher than the idea: the state — the state of consciousness, of knowledge, of perception — directly through the vibration. When you think, the mental substance vibrates in a certain way in accordance with the form your consciousness gives to your thought, and it is this vibration which should be perceived by the other mind if it is well attuned.

Indeed, words serve only to draw the attention of the other consciousness or the other centre of consciousness, so that it may be attentive to the vibration and receive it; but if it is not attentive and doesn't have the capacity to receive in comparative silence, you may pour out miles of words without making yourself understood in the least. And there comes a time when the brain, which is very active in emanating certain vibrations, can only receive vibrations which are clear and precise, otherwise it is a kind of vague mixture of something confused, imprecise, which gives the impression of a cloudy, woolly mass and doesn't evoke any idea. So one speaks, the sound is clearly heard, but it conveys nothing — it is not a question of sound, it is a matter of precision in the vibrations.

If you can emanate your thought in a very precise way, if it is something living and *conscious* emanating from your consciousness and going to meet the other consciousness, if, so to speak, you know what you want to say, then it arrives

with the same precision, it awakens the corresponding vibration and with the corresponding vibration comes the corresponding thought or idea or state of consciousness, and you understand each other; but if what is emanated is woolly, imprecise, if you do not know very well what you want to say, if you yourself are trying to understand what you want to say, and if, on the other hand, the attention of the hearer is not alert enough or he is busy and active somewhere else, well then, you may talk to each other for hours, you will not understand each other at all!

And in fact this is what happens most often. When you are able to see in the consciousness of others the result of what you have tried to communicate, it always gives you the feeling of... you know what distorting mirrors are? Have you never seen distorting mirrors? Mirrors which make you look taller or fatter, which enlarge one part and reduce another, you are faced with a grotesque caricature of yourself — well, this is exactly what happens: in the other person's consciousness you have an altogether grotesque caricature of what you have said. And people imagine that they have understood each other because they have heard the sound of words, but they haven't communicated.

So, if you want to exercise the least effect on the mental substance, the first thing is to learn how to think clearly, and not a verbal thought which depends on words but a thought which can dispense with words, which can be understood in itself without words, which corresponds to a *fact*, the fact of a state of consciousness or a fact of knowledge. Just try to think without words, you will see where you stand.

Have you never tried it? Well then, try.

You have an absolutely clear and precise understanding of what you want to communicate to others — it vibrates in a special way, it has the power to give a form to the mental substance; and then, *afterwards*, as a concession to human habits you organise a certain number of words around it to try — there, much lower down — to give a verbal form to the vibration of consciousness. But the verbal form is entirely secondary. It is a

kind of covering, a rather crude one, for the power of thought.

What provides the words?

Ah, no! Think clearly, I don't understand you. It is coming like that, like whirls of cotton-wool, and it makes no sense to me.

I see, the word comes out before the thought is formed.

Exactly!

The illustration of this power of thinking is what used to be called the gift of tongues. And in fact this phenomenon did take place and can still do so. You think — that is to say, what *I* call thinking — quite independently of words, with the clear vision of things and the power to communicate this vision, this phenomenon of consciousness which can be transmitted; now, you are with a large number of people or with a few people, who speak different languages and are used to thinking only in one particular language, for they have been brought up like that; but you project the vibration of your vision, of your understanding, of your experience of things. To attract the attention of the audience you pronounce some words — any language at all, the one most familiar to you, that's of no importance — but your vision and your emanation are precise enough to be transmitted directly to the brain of the others, and in their brain to be automatically translated into their own language. So, outwardly, you are speaking in French or in English, but each one understands in his own language. People think this is a legend — it is not a legend. And it is quite understandable, it is something almost elementary when one goes into the region which I call the region of thought. I am not speaking of supramental things, mind you; it is not a supramental power, it is simply the true realm of thought. That is, you begin to think.

And if you had an audience which also thinks, the phenomenon would take place automatically; only there are very

few people who really think. But when they do it powerfully enough, it breaks down the obstacle in the altogether superficial and down-to-earth perception, it rises up like this (*gesture showing a curve*), it goes up into a higher region of perception, and then, in each one, it falls back into the domain of his own language. And each one says with all the sincerity of his experience, "Oh! This person is speaking this language", and another says, "Excuse me, he is speaking that one!" and the third one says, "No, no! He is speaking that other one...." And in fact each one is telling the truth; he probably does not speak any of them except the one he normally uses, or one or two others.... But, it's that, it does this (*same gesture*) and then falls back... like radio-waves.

There, we are going to try. I am going to tell you something, we shall see if you understand.

(*Meditation*)

12 March 1958

"On the side of consciousness the new manifestation, the human, could be accounted for by an upsurge of concealed Consciousness from the involution in universal Nature. But in that case it must have had some material form already existent for its vehicle of emergence, the vehicle being adapted by the force of the emergence itself to the needs of a new inner creation; or else a rapid divergence from previous physical types or patterns may have brought a new being into existence. But whichever the hypothesis accepted, this means an evolutionary process, — there is only a difference in the method and machinery of the divergence or transition. Or there may have been, on the contrary, not an upsurgence but a descent of mentality from a Mind-plane above us, perhaps the descent of a soul or mental being into terrestrial Nature. The difficulty would then be the appearance of the human body, too complex and difficult an organ to have been suddenly created or manifested; for such a miraculous speed of process, though quite possible on a supraphysical plane of being, does not seem to figure among the normal possibles or potentials of the material Energy. It could only happen there by an intervention of a supraphysical force or law of Nature or by a creator Mind acting with full power and directly on Matter. An action of a supraphysical Force and a creator may be conceded in every new appearance in Matter; each such appearance is at bottom a miracle operated by a secret Consciousness supported by a veiled Mind-Energy or Life-Energy: but the action is nowhere seen to be direct, overt, self-sufficient; it is always superimposed on an already realised physical basis and acts by an

extension of some established process of Nature. It is more conceivable that there was an opening of some existing body to a supraphysical influx so that it was transformed into a new body; but no such event can lightly be assumed to have taken place in the past history of material Nature: in order to happen it would seem to need either the conscious intervention of an invisible mental being to form the body he intended to inhabit or else a previous development of a mental being in Matter itself who would be already able to receive a supraphysical power and impose it on the rigid and narrow formulas of his physical existence. Otherwise we must suppose that there was a pre-existent body already so much evolved as to be fitted for the reception of a vast mental influx or capable of a pliable response to the descent into it of a mental being. But this would suppose a previous evolution of mind in body to the point at which such a receptivity would be possible. It is quite conceivable that such an evolution from below and such a descent from above cooperated in the appearance of humanity in earth-nature. The secret psychical entity already there in the animal might have itself called down the mental being, the Mind-Purusha, into the realm of living Matter in order to take up the vital-mental energy already at work and lift it into a higher mentality. But this would still be a process of evolution, the higher plane only intervening to assist the appearance and enlargement of its own principle in terrestrial Nature."

The Life Divine, SABCL, Vol. 19, pp. 839–40

The difficulty of the problem is that only a mental being could take an interest in this process of transformation and creation, and that the mental consciousness in the animal species was not sufficient for it to take an interest in this process.

Animals had no means of noting what was happening, of taking it into consideration and remembering it. And that is why this part of the earth's history has almost disappeared. A mental capacity like man's must intervene to make it possible to follow the course of this transformation and retain a memory of it.... In fact, more is imagined than remembered. It is quite obvious that the psychic being has gone through all that, but it has not kept a mental memory of it. The memory of the psychic being is a psychic memory which is of an altogether different kind; it is not historical like mental memory which can keep a precise record of what takes place.

But now that we are on the threshold of the new transformation, the new emergence as it is called here, and now that we are going to witness the process of transformation between the human mental being and the supramental being, we shall profit by this historical ability of the mind which will follow what happens and take note of it. So, from that point of view also, the phenomenon which is taking place now is absolutely unique in the history of the earth, and probably — almost certainly — when we have followed the process of this transformation to the very end, we shall have the key to all the former transformations; that is, everything that we are trying to understand at present, we shall know for certain when the process is repeated, this time between the mental and the supramental being.

You are therefore invited to a very special development of the capacity for observation, so that all this may not take place in a half-dream and you awaken to a new life without even knowing how things have happened.

One must be very vigilant, wide awake, and instead of being interested in little inner psychological phenomena which are... quite antiquated — they belong to an entire period of human history which anyway has lost all its novelty — it would be better to be more attentive to things of greater general import, things more subtle, more impersonal which would put

you in the midst of new discoveries of a very special interest.

Open the eyes of the subtle intelligence, and without prejudice or preference, without egoism and without attachment, look at what is happening day by day.

19 March 1958

"Next, it may be conceded that each type or pattern of consciousness and being in the body, once established, has to be faithful to the law of being of that type, to its own design and rule of nature. But it may also very well be that part of the law of the human type is its impulse towards self-exceeding, that the means for a conscious transition has been provided for among the spiritual powers of man; the possession of such a capacity may be a part of the plan on which the creative Energy has built him. It may be conceded that what man has up till now principally done is to act within the circle of his nature, on a spiral of nature-movement, sometimes descending, sometimes ascending, — there has been no straight line of progress, no indisputable, fundamental or radical exceeding of his past nature: what he has done is to sharpen, subtilise, make a more and more complex and plastic use of his capacities. It cannot truly be said that there has been no such thing as human progress since man's appearance or even in his recent ascertainable history; for however great the ancients, however supreme some of their achievements and creations, however impressive their powers of spirituality, of intellect or of character, there has been in later developments an increasing subtlety, complexity, manifold development of knowledge and possibility in man's achievements, in his politics, society, life, science, metaphysics, knowledge of all kinds, art, literature; even in his spiritual endeavour, less surprisingly lofty and less massive in power of spirituality than that of the ancients, there has been this increasing subtlety, plasticity, sounding of depths, extension of seeking. There have been falls from a high type

of culture, a sharp temporary descent into a certain obscurantism, cessations of the spiritual urge, plunges into a barbaric natural materialism; but these are temporary phenomena, at worst a downward curve of the spiral of progress. This progress has not indeed carried the race beyond itself, into a self-exceeding, a transformation of the mental being. But that was not to be expected; for the action of evolutionary Nature in a type of being and consciousness is first to develop the type to its utmost capacity by just such a subtilisation and increasing complexity till it is ready for her bursting of the shell, the ripened decisive emergence, reversal, turning over of consciousness on itself that constitutes a new stage in the evolution. If it be supposed that her next step is the spiritual and supramental being, the stress of spirituality in the race may be taken as a sign that that is Nature's intention, the sign too of the capacity of man to operate in himself or aid her to operate the transition. If the appearance in animal being of a type similar in some respects to the ape-kind but already from the beginning endowed with the elements of humanity was the method of the human evolution, the appearance in the human being of a spiritual type resembling mental-animal humanity but already with the stamp of the spiritual aspiration on it would be the obvious method of Nature for the evolutionary production of the spiritual and supramental being."

The Life Divine, SABCL, Vol. 19, pp. 841–42

One thing seems obvious, humanity has reached a certain state of general tension — tension in effort, in action, even in daily life — with such an excessive hyperactivity, so widespread a trepidation, that mankind as a whole seems to have come to a point where it must either break through the resistance and emerge into a new consciousness or else fall back into an abyss of darkness and inertia.

This tension is so complete and so widespread that something obviously has to break. It cannot go on in this way. We may take it as a sure sign of the infusion into matter of a new principle of force, consciousness, power, which by its very pressure is producing this acute state. Outwardly, we could expect the old methods used by Nature when she wants to bring about an upheaval; but there is a new characteristic, which of course is only visible in an *élite*, but even this *élite* is fairly widespread — it is not localised at one point, at one place in the world; we find traces of it in all countries, all over the world: the will to find a new, higher, progressive solution, an effort to rise towards a vaster, more comprehensive perfection.

Certain ideas of a more general nature, of a wider, perhaps more "collective" kind, are being worked out and are acting in the world. And both things go together: a possibility of a greater and more total destruction, a reckless inventiveness which increases the possibility of catastrophe, a castastrophe which would be on a far greater scale than it has ever been; and, at the same time, the birth or rather the manifestation of much higher and more comprehensive ideas and acts of will which, when they are heard, will bring a wider, vaster, more complete, more perfect remedy than before.

This struggle, this conflict between the constructive forces of the ascending evolution of a more and more perfect and divine realisation, and the more and more destructive, powerfully destructive forces — forces that are mad beyond all control — is more and more obvious, marked, visible, and it is a kind of race or struggle as to which will reach the goal first. It would seem that all the adverse, anti-divine forces, the forces of the vital world, have descended on the earth, are making use of it as their field of action, and that at the same time a new, higher, more powerful spiritual force has also descended on earth to bring it a new life. This makes the struggle more acute, more violent, more visible, but it seems also more definitive, and that is why we can hope to reach an early solution.

There was a time, not so long ago, when the spiritual aspiration of man was turned towards a silent, inactive peace, detached from all worldly things, a flight from life, precisely to avoid battle, to rise above the struggle, escape all effort; it was a spiritual peace in which, along with the cessation of all tension, struggle, effort, there ceased also suffering in all its forms, and this was considered to be the true and only expression of a spiritual and divine life. It was considered to be the divine grace, the divine help, the divine intervention. And even now, in this age of anguish, tension, hypertension, this sovereign peace is the best received aid of all, the most welcome, the solace people ask and hope for. For many it is still the true sign of a divine intervention, of divine grace.

In fact, no matter what one wants to realise, one must begin by establishing this perfect and immutable peace; it is the basis from which one must work; but unless one is dreaming of an exclusive, personal and egoistic liberation, one cannot stop there. There is another aspect of the divine grace, the aspect of progress which will be victorious over all obstacles, the aspect which will propel humanity to a new realisation, which will open the doors of a new world and make it possible not only for a chosen few to benefit by the divine realisation but for their influence, their example, their power to bring to the rest of mankind new and better conditions.

This opens up roads of realisation into the future, possibilities which are already foreseen, when an entire part of humanity, the one which has opened consciously or unconsciously to the new forces, is lifted up, as it were, into a higher, more harmonious, more perfect life.... Even if individual transformation is not always permissible or possible, there will be a kind of general uplifting, a harmonisation of the whole, which will make it possible for a new order, a new harmony to be established and for the anguish of the present disorder and struggle to disappear and be replaced by an order which will allow a harmonious functioning of the whole.

There will be other consequences which will tend to eliminate in an opposite way what the intervention of the mind in life has created, the perversions, the ugliness, the whole mass of distortions which have increased suffering, misery, moral poverty, an entire area of sordid and repulsive misery which makes a whole part of human life into something so frightful. That must disappear. This is what makes humanity in so many ways infinitely worse than animal life in its simplicity and the natural spontaneity and harmony that it has in spite of everything. Suffering in animals is never so miserable and sordid as it is in an entire section of humanity which has been perverted by the use of a mentality exclusively at the service of egoistic needs.

We must rise above, spring up into Light and Harmony or fall back, down into the simplicity of a healthy unperverted animal life.

When this talk was first published in 1958, Mother added the following note on the "uplifting" of an entire part of humanity by the action of the new forces:

But those who cannot be lifted up, those who refuse to progress, will automatically lose the use of the mental consciousness and will fall back to a sub-human level.

I shall tell you about an experience I had which will help you to understand better. It was shortly after the supramental experience of the third of February,[1] and I was still in the state in which things of the physical world seemed so far off, so absurd. A group of visitors had asked permission to come to me and one evening they came to the Playground. They were rich people, that is, they had more money than they needed to live on. Among them there was a woman in a sari; she was very fat, her sari was arranged so as to hide her body. As she was bending down to receive my blessings, one corner of the sari came open, uncovering a part of her body, a naked belly

[1] See Appendix to the talk of February 19.

— an enormous one. I felt a real shock.... There are corpulent people who have nothing repugnant about them, but I suddenly saw the perversion, the rottenness that this belly concealed, it was like a huge abscess, expressing greed, vice, depraved taste, sordid desire, which finds its satisfaction as no animal would, in grossness and especially in perversity. I saw the perversion of a depraved mind at the service of the lowest appetites. Then, all of a sudden, something sprang up from me, a prayer, like a Veda: "O Lord, this is what must disappear!"

One understands very well that physical misery, the unequal distribution of the goods of this world could be changed, one can imagine economic and social solutions which could remedy this, but it is that misery, the mental misery, the vital perversion, it is that which cannot change, doesn't want to change. And those who belong to this type of humanity are condemned in advance to disintegration.

That is the meaning of original sin: the perversion which began with the mind.

That part of humanity, of human consciousness, which is capable of uniting with the supermind and liberating itself, will be completely transformed — it is advancing towards a future reality which is not yet expressed in its outer form; the part which is closest to Nature, to animal simplicity, will be reabsorbed into Nature and thoroughly assimilated. But the corrupted part of human consciousness which allows perversion through its misuse of the mind will be abolished.

This type of humanity is part of an unfruitful attempt — which must be eliminated — just as there have been other abortive species which have disappeared in the course of universal history.

Certain prophets in the past have had this apocalyptic vision but, as usual, things were mixed, and they did not have together with their vision of the apocalypse the vision of the supramental world which will come to raise up the part of humanity which consents and to transform this physical world. So, to give hope

to those who have been born into it, into this perverted part of human consciousness, they have taught redemption through faith: those who have faith in the sacrifice of the Divine in Matter will be automatically saved, in another world — by faith alone, without understanding, without intelligence. They have not seen the supramental world nor that the great Sacrifice of the Divine in Matter is the sacrifice of involution which must culminate in the total revelation of the Divine in Matter itself.

26 March 1958

"It is pertinently suggested that if such an evolutionary culmination is intended and man is to be its medium, it will only be a few especially evolved human beings who will form the new type and move towards the new life; that once done, the rest of humanity will sink back from a spiritual aspiration no longer necessary for Nature's purpose and remain quiescent in its normal status. It can equally be reasoned that the human gradation must be preserved if there is really an ascent of the soul by reincarnation through the evolutionary degrees towards the spiritual summit; for otherwise the most necessary of all the intermediate steps will be lacking. It must be conceded at once that there is not the least probability or possibility of the whole human race rising in a block to the supramental level; what is suggested is nothing so revolutionary and astonishing, but only the capacity in the human mentality, when it has reached a certain level or a certain point of stress of the evolutionary impetus, to press towards a higher plane of consciousness and its embodiment in the being. The being will necessarily undergo by this embodiment a change from the normal constitution of its nature, a change certainly of its mental and emotional and sensational constitution and also to a great extent of the body-consciousness and the physical conditioning of our life and energies; but the change of consciousness will be the chief factor, the initial movement, the physical modification will be a subordinate factor, a consequence. This transmutation of the consciousness will always remain possible to the human being when the flame of the soul, the psychic kindling, becomes potent in heart and mind and the

> *nature is ready. The spiritual aspiration is innate in man; for he is, unlike the animal, aware of imperfection and limitation and feels that there is something to be attained beyond what he now is: this urge towards self-exceeding is not likely ever to die out totally in the race. The human mental status will be always there, but it will be there not only as a degree in the scale of rebirth, but as an open step towards the spiritual and supramental status."*
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> *The Life Divine, SABCL, Vol. 19, pp. 842–43*

It is obvious that what especially characterises man is this mental capacity of watching himself live. The animal lives spontaneously, automatically, and if it watches itself live, it must be to a very minute and insignificant degree, and that is why it is peaceful and does not worry. Even if an animal is suffering because of an accident or an illness, this suffering is reduced to a minimum by the fact that it does not observe it, does not project it in its consciousness and into the future, does not imagine things about its illness or its accident.

With man there has begun this perpetual worrying about what is going to happen, and this worry is the principal, if not the sole cause of his torment. With this objectivising consciousness there has begun anxiety, painful imaginations, worry, torment, anticipation of future catastrophes, with the result that most men — and not the least conscious, the most conscious — live in perpetual torment. Man is too conscious to be indifferent, he is not conscious enough to know what will happen. Truly it could be said without fear of making a mistake that of all earth's creatures he is the most miserable. The human being is used to being like that because it is an atavistic state which he has inherited from his ancestors, but it is truly a miserable condition. And it is only with this spiritual capacity of rising to a higher level and replacing the animal's unconsciousness by a spiritual super-consciousness that there comes into the being not only the capacity to see the goal of existence and to foresee

the culmination of the effort but also a clear-sighted trust in a higher spiritual power to which one can surrender one's whole being, entrust oneself, give the responsibility for one's life and future and so abandon all worries.

Of course, it is impossible for man to fall back to the level of the animal and lose the consciousness he has acquired; therefore, for him there is only one means, one way to get out of this condition he is in, which I call a miserable one, and to emerge into a higher state where worry is replaced by a trusting surrender and the certitude of a luminous culmination — this way is to change the consciousness.

Truly speaking there is no condition more miserable than being responsible for an existence to which one doesn't have the key, that is, of which one doesn't have the threads that can guide and solve the problems. The animal sets itself no problems: it just lives. Its instinct drives it, it relies on a collective consciousness which has an innate knowledge and is higher than itself, but it is automatic, spontaneous, it has no need to will something and make an effort to bring it about, it is quite naturally like that, and as it is not responsible for its life, it does not worry. With man is born the sense of having to depend on himself, and as he does not have the necessary knowledge the result is a perpetual torment. This torment can come to an end only with a total surrender to a higher consciousness than his own to which he can totally entrust himself, hand over his worries and leave the care of guiding his life and organising everything.

How can a problem be solved when one doesn't have the necessary knowledge? And the unfortunate thing is that man believes that he has to resolve all the problems of his life, and he does not have the knowledge needed to do it. That is the source, the origin of all his troubles — that perpetual question, "What should I do?..." which is followed by another one still more acute, "What is going to happen?" and at the same time, more or less, the inability to answer.

That is why all spiritual disciplines begin with the necessity

of surrendering all responsibility and relying on a higher principle. Otherwise peace is impossible.

And yet, consciousness has been given to man so that he can progress, can discover what he doesn't know, develop into what he has not yet become; and so it may be said that there is a higher state than that of an immobile and static peace: it is a trust total enough for one to keep the will to progress, to preserve the effort for progress while ridding it of all anxiety, all care for results and consequences. This is one step ahead of the methods which may be called "quietist", which are founded on the rejection of all activity and a plunging into an immobility and inner silence, which forsake all life because it has been suddenly felt that without peace one can't have any inner realisation and, quite naturally, one thought that one couldn't have peace so long as one was living in outer conditions, in the state of anxiety in which problems are set and cannot be solved, for one does not have the knowledge to do so.

The next step is to face the problem, but with the calm and certitude of an absolute trust in the supreme Power which knows, and can make you act. And then, instead of abandoning action, one can act in a higher peace that is strong and dynamic.

This is what could be called a new aspect of the divine intervention in life, a new form of intervention of the divine forces in existence, a new aspect of spiritual realisation.

2 April 1958

Mother, you said that when one consciously makes a mistake it is much more serious than if one makes it unconsciously.

When you make a mistake because you don't know that it is a mistake, through ignorance, it is obvious that when you learn that it is a mistake, when the ignorance has gone and you have goodwill, you don't make the mistake any more, and so you come out of the condition in which you could make it. But if you know it is a mistake and make it, this means that there is something perverse in you which has deliberately chosen to be on the side of confusion or bad will or even the anti-divine forces.

And it is quite obvious that if one chooses to be on the side of the anti-divine forces or is so weak and inconsistent that one can't resist the temptation to be on their side, it is infinitely more serious from the psychological point of view. This means that somewhere something has been corrupted: either an adverse force is already established in you or else you have an innate sympathy for these forces. And it is much more difficult to correct that than to correct an ignorance.

Correcting an ignorance is like eliminating darkness: you light a lamp, the darkness disappears. But to make a mistake once again when you know it is a mistake, is as if someone lighted a lamp and you deliberately put it out.... That corresponds exactly to bringing the darkness back deliberately. For the argument of weakness does not hold. The divine Grace is *always* there to help those who have decided to correct themselves, and they cannot say, "I am too weak to correct myself." They can say that they still haven't taken the resolution to correct themselves, that somewhere in the being there is something that has *not decided* to do it, and that is what is serious.

The argument of weakness is an excuse. The Grace is there to give the supreme strength to whoever takes the resolution.

That means an insincerity, it does not mean a weakness. And insincerity is always an open door for the adversary. That means there is some secret sympathy with what is perverse. And that is what is serious.

In the case of ignorance which is to be enlightened, it is enough, as I said, to light the lamp. In the case of conscious relapse, what is necessary is a cauterisation.

9 April 1958

Sweet Mother, with the human mind is it possible to recognise another person's soul?

Things are not so clear-cut and separate as they are in speaking; that is just why it is quite difficult to see very distinctly and clearly in oneself the different parts of the being, unless one has had a very long training and a long discipline of study and observation. There are no watertight compartments between the soul and the mind, the vital and even the physical. There is an infiltration of the soul into the mind. In some people it is even quite considerable, it is perceptible. So, the part of the mind which has a kind of sensibility, of subtle contact with the psychic being, is capable of feeling the presence of the soul in others.

Those who have the ability to enter to a certain extent into the consciousness of others to the point of being able to see or feel directly their thought, their mental activity, who can enter the mental atmosphere of others without needing to use words to make themselves understood, can easily differentiate between someone whose soul is active and someone whose soul is asleep. The activity of the soul gives a special colouring to the mental activity — it is lighter, more comprehensive and luminous — so that can be felt. For instance, by looking into someone's eyes you can say with some certainty that this person has a living soul or that you don't see his soul in his eyes. Many people can feel — "many", I mean among evolved people — can say that. But naturally, to know exactly how far somebody's soul is awake and active, how far it rules the being, is the master, one must have the psychic consciousness oneself, for that alone can judge definitively. But it is not altogether impossible to have that sort of inner vibration which makes you say, "Oh! This person has a soul."

Now, obviously, most often what people — unless they are initiated — call "soul" is the vital activity. If someone has a strong, active, obstinate vital which rules the body's activities, which has a very living or intense contact with people and things and events, if he has a marked taste for art, for all expressions of beauty, we are generally tempted to say and believe, "Oh! He has a living soul"; but it is not his soul, it is his vital being which is alive and dominates the activities of the body. That is the first difference between someone who is beginning to be developed and those who are still in the inertia and *tamas* of the purely material life. This gives, first to the appearance and also to the activity, a kind of vibration, of intensity of vibration, which often creates the impression that this person has a living soul; but it is not that, it is his vital which is developed, which has a special capacity, is stronger than the physical inertia and gives an intensity of vibration and life and action that those whose vital being is not developed do not possess. This confusion between the vital activity and the soul is a very frequent one.... The vital vibration is much more easily perceptible to the human consciousness than the vibration of the soul.

To perceive the soul in someone, as a rule the mind must be very quiet — very quiet, for when it is active, *its* vibrations are seen, not the vibration of the soul.

And then, when you look at someone who is conscious of his soul, and lives in his soul, if you look like this, the impression you have is of descending, of entering deep, deep, deep into the person, far, far, far, far within; while usually when you look into someone's eyes, you very soon come to a surface which vibrates and answers your look, but you don't have that feeling of going down, down, down, down, going deep as into a hole and very far, very, very, very far within, so you have... a small, very quiet response. Otherwise, usually you enter — there are eyes you cannot enter, they are closed like a door; but still there are eyes which are open — you enter and then, quite close behind, you come to something vibrating there, like this, shining at times,

vibrating. And then, that's it; if you make a mistake, you say, "Oh! He has a living soul" — it is not that, it is his vital.

In order to find the soul you must go in this way (*gesture of going deep within*), like this, draw back from the surface, withdraw deep within and enter, enter, enter, go down, down, down into a very deep hole, silent, immobile, and there, there's a kind of... something warm, quiet, rich in substance and very still, and very full, like a sweetness — that is the soul.

And if one is insistent and is conscious oneself, then there comes a kind of plenitude which gives the feeling of something complete that contains unfathomable depths in which, should one enter, one feels that many secrets would be revealed... like the reflection in very peaceful waters of something that is eternal. And one no longer feels limited by time.

One has the feeling of having always been and of being for eternity.

That is when one has touched the core of the soul.

And if the contact has been conscious and complete enough, it liberates you from the bondage of outer form; you no longer feel that you live only because you have a body. That is usually the ordinary sensation of the being, to be so tied to this outer form that when one thinks of "myself" one thinks of the body. That is the usual thing. The personal reality is the body's reality. It is only when one has made an effort for inner development and tried to find something that is a little more stable in one's being, that one can begin to feel that this "something" which is permanently conscious throughout all ages and all change, this something must be "myself". But that already requires a study that is rather deep. Otherwise if you think "I am going to do this", "I need that", it is always your body, a small kind of will which is a mixture of sensations, of more or less confused sentimental reactions, and still more confused thoughts which form a mixture and are animated by an impulse, an attraction, a desire, some sort of a will; and all that momentarily becomes "myself" — but not directly, for one does not conceive this "myself" as

independent of the head, the trunk, the arms and legs and all that moves — it is very closely linked.

It is only after having thought much, seen much, studied much, observed much that you begin to realise that the one is more or less independent of the other and that the will behind can make it either act or not act, and you begin not to be completely identified with the movement, the action, the realisation — that something is floating. But you have to observe much to see that.

And then you must observe much more still to see that this, the second thing that is there, this kind of active conscious will, is set in motion by "something else" which watches, judges, decides and tries to found its decisions on knowledge — that happens even much later. And so, when you begin to see this "something else", you begin to see that it has the power to set in motion the second thing, which is an active will; and not only that, but that it has a very direct and very important action on the reactions, the feelings, the sensations, and that finally it can have control over all the movements of the being — this part which watches, observes, judges and decides.

That is the beginning of control.

When one becomes conscious of that, one has seized the thread, and when one speaks of control, one can know, "Ah! Yes, this is what has the power of control."

This is how one learns to look at oneself.

16 April 1958

"In the previous stages of the evolution Nature's first care and effort had to be directed towards a change in the physical organisation, for only so could there be a change of consciousness; this was a necessity imposed by the insufficiency of the force of consciousness already in formation to effect a change in the body. But in man a reversal is possible, indeed inevitable; for it is through his consciousness, through its transmutation and no longer through a new bodily organism as a first instrumentation that the evolution can and must be effected. In the inner reality of things a change of consciousness was always the major fact, the evolution has always had a spiritual significance and the physical change was only instrumental; but this relation was concealed by the first abnormal balance of the two factors, the body of the external Inconscience outweighing and obscuring in importance the spiritual element, the conscious being. But once the balance has been righted, it is no longer the change of body that must precede the change of consciousness; the consciousness itself by its mutation will necessitate and operate whatever mutation is needed for the body. It has to be noted that the human mind has already shown a capacity to aid Nature in the evolution of new types of plant and animal; it has created new forms of its environment, developed by knowledge and discipline considerable changes in its own mentality. It is not an impossibility that man should aid Nature consciously also in his own spiritual and physical evolution and transformation. The urge to it is already there and partly effective, though still incompletely understood and accepted by the surface mentality; but one day it

may understand, go deeper within itself and discover the means, the secret energy, the intended operation of the Consciousness-Force within which is the hidden reality of what we call Nature....

"If a spiritual unfolding on earth is the hidden truth of our birth into Matter, if it is fundamentally an evolution of consciousness that has been taking place in Nature, then man as he is cannot be the last term of that evolution: he is too imperfect an expression of the Spirit, Mind itself a too limited form and instrumentation; Mind is only a middle term of consciousness, the mental being can only be a transitional being. If, then, man is incapable of exceeding mentality, he must be surpassed and Supermind and superman must manifest and take the lead of the creation. But if his mind is capable of opening to what exceeds it, then there is no reason why man himself should not arrive at Supermind and supermanhood or at least lend his mentality, life and body to an evolution of that greater term of the Spirit manifesting in Nature."

The Life Divine, SABCL, Vol. 19, pp. 843–44; 846–47

Anyway, we have now reached a certitude since there is already a beginning of realisation. We have the proof that in certain conditions the ordinary state of humanity can be exceeded and a new state of consciousness worked out which enables at least a conscious relation between mental and supramental man.

It can be asserted with certainty that there will be an intermediate specimen between the mental and the supramental being, a kind of superman who will still have the qualities and in part the nature of man, that is, who will still belong in his most external form to the human being with its animal origin, but will transform his consciousness sufficiently to belong in his realisation and activity to a new race, a race of supermen.

This species may be considered a transitional species, for

one can foresee that it will discover the means of producing new beings without going through the old animal method, and these beings — who will have a truly spiritual birth — will constitute the elements of the new race, the supramental race.

So we could call supermen those who, in their origin, still belong to the old method of generation but in their achievement are in conscious and active contact with the new world of supramental realisation.

It seems — it is even certain — that the very substance which will constitute this intermediate world that is already being built up, is richer, more powerful, more luminous, more resistant, with certain subtler, more penetrating new qualities, and a kind of innate capacity of universality, as if its degree of subtlety and refinement allowed the perception of vibrations in a much wider, if not altogether total way, and it removes the sensation of division one has with the old substance, the ordinary mental substance. There is a subtlety of vibration which makes global, universal perception a spontaneous and natural thing. The sense of division, of separation, disappears quite naturally and spontaneously with that substance. And that substance is at present almost universally diffused in the earth atmosphere. It is perceptible in the waking state, simply with a little concentration and a kind of absorption of consciousness, if this is retracted, withdrawn from the ordinary externalisation which seems more and more artificial and false. This externalisation, this perception which formerly was natural, now seems false, unreal and completely artificial; it does not at all answer to things as they are, it belongs to a movement which does not correspond to anything really true.

This new perception is asserting itself more and more, becoming more and more natural, and it is even sometimes difficult to recapture the old way of being, as though it were vanishing into a misty past — something which is on the point of ceasing to exist.

One may conclude from this that the moment a body, which

was of course formed by the old animal method, is capable of living this consciousness naturally and spontaneously, without effort, without going out of itself, it proves that this is not one single exceptional case but simply the forerunner of a realisation which, even if it is not altogether general, can at least be shared by a certain number of individuals who, besides, as soon as they share it, will lose the perception of being separate individuals and become a living collectivity.

This new realisation is proceeding with what one might call a lightning speed, for if we consider time in the ordinary way, only two years have passed — a little more than two years — from the time the supramental substance penetrated into the earth atmosphere to the time the change in the quality of the earth atmosphere took place.

If things go on advancing at this speed, it seems more than possible, almost evident, that what Sri Aurobindo wrote in a letter is a prophetic announcement: The supramental consciousness will enter a phase of realising power in 1967.[1]

[1] "4-5-67 is the year of complete realisation." *Letters on Yoga*, SABCL, Vol. 22, p. 35

23 April 1958

Sweet Mother, when we make an effort to do better but don't see any progress, we feel discouraged. What is the best thing to do?

Not to be discouraged! Despondency leads nowhere.

To begin with, the first thing to tell yourself is that you are almost entirely incapable of knowing whether you are making progress or not, for very often what seems to us to be a state of stagnation is a long — sometimes long, but in any case not endless — preparation for a leap forward. We sometimes seem to be marking time for weeks or months, and then suddenly something that was being prepared makes its appearance, and we see that there is quite a considerable change and *on several points* at a time.

As with everything in yoga, the effort for progress must be made for the love of the effort for progress. The joy of effort, the aspiration for progress must be enough in themselves, quite independent of the result. Everything one does in yoga must be done for the joy of doing it, and not in view of the result one wants to obtain.... Indeed, in life, always, in all things, the result does not belong to us. And if we want to keep the right attitude, we must act, feel, think, strive spontaneously, for *that* is what we must do, and not in view of the result to be obtained.

As soon as we think of the result we begin to bargain and that takes away all sincerity from the effort. You make an effort to progress because you feel within you the need, the *imperative* need to make an effort and progress; and this effort is the gift you offer to the Divine Consciousness in you, the Divine Consciousness in the Universe, it is your way of expressing your gratitude, offering your self; and whether this results in progress

or not is of no importance. You will progress when it is decided that the time has come to progress and not because you desire it.

If you wish to progress, if you make an effort to control yourself for instance, to overcome certain defects, weaknesses, imperfections, and if you expect to get a more or less immediate result from your effort, your effort loses all sincerity, it becomes a bargaining. You say, "See! I am going to make an effort, but that's because I want this in exchange for my effort." You are no longer spontaneous, no longer natural.

So there are two things to remember. First, we are incapable of judging *what* the result ought to be. If we put our trust in the Divine, if we say... if we say, "Well now, I am going to give everything, everything, all I can give, effort, concentration, and *He* will judge what has to be given in exchange or even whether anything should be given in exchange, and I do not know what the result should be." Before we transform anything in ourselves, are we quite sure of the direction, the way, the form that this transformation should take? — Not at all. So, it is only our imagination and usually we greatly limit the result to be obtained and make it altogether petty, mean, superficial, relative. We do not know what the result can truly be, what it ought to be. We know it later. When it comes, when the change takes place, then if we look back, we say, "Ah! That's it, that is what I was moving towards" — but we know it only later. Before that we only have vague imaginations which are quite superficial and childish in comparison with the true progress, the true transformation.

So we say, first point: we have an aspiration but we don't really know the true result we ought to obtain. Only the Divine can know that.

And secondly, if we tell the Divine, "I am giving you my effort, but, you know, in exchange I must make progress, otherwise I won't give you anything at all!" — that is bargaining. That's all.

(*Silence*)

A spontaneous act, done because one cannot do otherwise, and done as an offering of goodwill, is the only one which truly has any value.

30 April 1958

As I had foreseen, I have received a shower of questions to oblige me to explain mentally my supramental experience of the third of February.[1]

You want to make me speak and mentalise the experience until a new system is established and you can sit down comfortably in your new mental construction.... I am sorry to have to disappoint you but this is absolutely impossible. And if you want to understand what I have written, well, make an effort to have a supramental consciousness.

That is all I have to say to you.

And beware of the mania of wanting to replace an old dogma by a new one and saying, "Oh! All that was false, but now we are going to work out a fine practical guide to conduct which will be the true one."

Well, a mental construction will never be true, and I refuse to make one. I was obliged to use words which men understand, but I did it in the most incoherent way possible! in order not to be too mental, and I refuse to be coherent in the mental fashion; and that, not only for the questions I have here or those I have received in letters, but for all those that are still to come on the same subject. So it will be useless to ask me any.

I would advise the same thing to everyone: Make an effort, work, open yourself, give yourself up entirely to the new Force, and a day will come when you will have the experience.

With the experience you will understand precisely how useless the questions were.

[1] See pp. 271–276.

7 May 1958

"In the earliest stages of evolutionary Nature we are met by the dumb secrecy of her inconscience; there is no revelation of any significance or purpose in her works, no hint of any other principles of being than that first formulation which is her immediate preoccupation and seems to be for ever her only business: for in her primal works Matter alone appears, the sole dumb and stark cosmic reality. A Witness of creation, if there had been one conscious but uninstructed, would only have seen appearing out of a vast abyss of an apparent non-existence an Energy busy with the creation of Matter, a material world and material objects, organising the infinity of the Inconscient into the scheme of a boundless universe or a system of countless universes that stretched around him into Space without any certain end or limit, a tireless creation of nebulae and star-clusters and suns and planets, existing only for itself, without a sense in it, empty of cause or purpose. It might have seemed to him a stupendous machinery without a use, a mighty meaningless movement, an aeonic spectacle without a witness, a cosmic edifice without an inhabitant; for he would have seen no sign of an indwelling Spirit, no being for whose delight it was made. A creation of this kind could only be the outcome of an inconscient Energy or an illusion-cinema, a shadow-play or puppet-play of forms reflected on a superconscient indifferent Absolute. He would have seen no evidence of a soul and no hint of Mind or Life in this immeasurable and interminable display of Matter. It would not have seemed to him possible or imaginable that there could at all be in this desert universe for ever inanimate and insensible an outbreak of teeming life,

a first vibration of something occult and incalculable, alive and conscious, a secret spiritual entity feeling its way towards the surface."

The Life Divine, SABCL, Vol. 19, pp. 848–49

I did not understand this sentence, Sweet Mother: "In the earliest stages of evolutionary Nature we are met by the dumb secrecy of her inconscience." What is this secrecy, Sweet Mother?

The intention of Nature?... It is what Sri Aurobindo has said from the beginning, that, hidden in the depths, at the core of matter, there is the Divine Presence and that the whole terrestrial evolution is made to prepare the return of the creation to its origin, to this Divine Presence which is at the centre of everything — that is the intention of Nature.

The universe is an objectivisation of the Supreme, as if He had objectivised himself outside of himself in order to see himself, to live himself, to know himself, and so that there might be an existence and a consciousness capable of recognising him as their origin and uniting consciously with him to manifest him in the becoming. There is no other reason for the universe. The earth is a kind of symbolic crystallisation of universal life, a reduction, a concentration, so that the work of evolution may be easier to do and follow. And if we see the history of the earth, we can understand why the universe has been created. It is the Supreme growing aware of himself in an eternal Becoming; and the goal is the union of the created with the Creator, a union that is conscious, willing and free, in the Manifestation.

That is the secret of Nature. Nature is the executive Force, it is she who does the work.

And she takes up this creation, which appears to be totally inconscient but which contains the Supreme Consciousness and sole Reality and she works so that all this can develop, become self-aware and realise itself fully. But she does not show it from

the very beginning. It develops gradually, and that is why at the start it is a secret which will be unveiled as it nears the end. And man has reached a point in the evolution high enough for this secret to be unveiled and for what was done in an apparent inconscience to be done consciously, willingly, and therefore much more rapidly and in the joy of realisation.

In man one can already see that the spiritual reality is being developed and that it is going to express itself totally and freely. Formerly, in the animal and the plant, it was... it was necessary to be very clear-sighted to see it, but man is himself conscious of this spiritual reality, at least in the higher part of his human existence. Man is beginning to know what the Supreme Origin wants of him and is collaborating in carrying it out.

Nature wants the creation to become conscious of being the Creator himself in an objectivisation, that is to say, there is no difference between the Creator and the Creation, and the goal is a conscious and realised union. That is the secret of Nature.

Mother, here Sri Aurobindo writes: "the dumb secrecy of her inconscience". Why her "inconscience"?

Whose inconscience?

Nature's.

No, Nature is not unconscious, but she has an *appearance* of unconsciousness. It began with the inconscience, but in the depths of the inconscience there was consciousness, and this consciousness is gradually developing.[1] For instance, mineral nature, stones, earth, metals, water, air, all this seems to be quite unconscious, although if one observes closely... And now science is discovering that this is only an appearance, that all this is only

[1] When this talk was first published, Mother made the following correction: "It is not the consciousness which develops, it is the manifestation of consciousness which develops, its expression: it expresses itself more and more."

concentrated energy, and of course it is a conscious force which has produced all this. But apparently, when we see a rock, we don't think it is conscious, it does not give the impression of being conscious, it seems to be altogether unconscious.

It is the appearance that is inconscient. It becomes more and more conscious. Even in the mineral kingdom there are phenomena which reveal a hidden consciousness, like certain crystals, for instance. If you see with what precision, what exactitude and harmony they are formed, if you are in the least open, you are bound to feel that behind there's a consciousness at work, that this cannot be the result of unconscious chance.

Have you seen rock-crystals?... You have never seen a rock-crystal?

Yes.

It is pretty, isn't it? It is something very artistic.

And the movements of the sea, the movements of the air, of the wind, one can't help feeling that behind there is a consciousness or even many consciousnesses at work. In fact, it is like that. Only the most superficial appearance is inconscient.

(*Silence*)

Is that all?

Indeed, in every being, the whole process of evolution is reproduced, as if at a dizzy speed one were reviewing all that has been done, and as if it were necessary to relive all that in a flash before taking the next step.

(*Silence*)

The start, the great journey in the inconscience, in darkness, oblivion, unconsciousness, the awakening... and the return to the light.

14 May 1958

"As plant-life contains in itself the obscure possibility of the conscious animal, as the animal-mind is astir with the movements of feeling and perception and the rudiments of conception that are the first ground for man the thinker, so man the mental being is sublimated by the endeavour of the evolutionary Energy to develop out of him the spiritual man, the fully conscious being, man exceeding his first material self and discoverer of his true self and highest nature.

"But if this is to be accepted as the intention in Nature, there are two questions that put themselves at once and call for a definitive answer,—first, the exact nature of the transition from mental to spiritual being and, when that is given, the process and method of the evolution of the spiritual out of the mental man. It would at first sight seem evident that as each gradation emerges not only out of its precedent grade but in it, as Life emerges in Matter and is largely limited and determined in its self-expression by its material conditions, as Mind emerges in Life-in-Matter and is similarly limited and determined in its self-expression by life-conditions and material conditions, so Spirit too must emerge in a Mind embodied in Life-in-Matter and must be largely limited and determined by the mental conditions in which it has its roots as well as the life-conditions, the material conditions of its existence here...."

The Life Divine, SABCL, Vol. 19, pp. 851–52

As the beginnings of the supramental life, which must be the next realisation in the unfolding of the universe, develop, perhaps not in a very obvious way but very surely, it becomes more and more

obvious that the most difficult way to approach this supramental life is intellectual activity.

It could be said that it is much more difficult to pass from the mental to the supramental life than to pass from a certain psychic emotion in life — something that is like a reflection, a luminous emanation of the divine Presence in matter — to the supramental consciousness; it is much easier to pass from that into the supramental consciousness than to pass from the highest intellectual speculation to any supramental vibration. Perhaps it is the word that misleads us! Perhaps it is because we call it "supramental" that we expect to reach it through a higher intellectual mental activity? But the fact is very different. With this very high, very pure, very noble intellectual activity, one seems to move towards a kind of cold, powerless abstraction, a frozen, an icy light which is surely very remote from life and still further away from the experience of the supramental reality.

In this new substance which is spreading and acting in the world, there is a warmth, a power, a joy so intense that all intellectual activity seems cold and dry beside it. And that is why the less one talks about these things the better it is. A single moment, a single impulse of deep and true love, an instant of the understanding which lies in the divine Grace brings you much closer to the goal than all possible explanations.

Even a kind of refined sensation, subtle, clear, luminous, acute, which penetrates deep, opens the door for you more than the subtlest explanations.

And if we carry the experience still further, it seems that when one comes to the work of transformation of the body, when some cells of the body, more ready than others, more refined, more subtle, more plastic, are able to feel concretely the presence of the divine Grace, the divine Will, the divine Power, this Knowledge that is not intellectual but a knowledge by identity, when one feels this in the cells of the body, then the experience is so total, so imperative, so living, concrete, tangible, real that everything else seems a vain dream.

And so we may say that it is truly when the circle is complete and the two extremities touch, when the highest manifests in the most material, that the experience will be truly conclusive.

It seems that one can never truly understand until one understands with one's body.

21 May 1958

Sweet Mother, what does "mental honesty" mean exactly?

It is a mind that does not attempt to deceive itself. And in fact it is not an "attempt", for it succeeds very well in doing it!

It would seem that in the ordinary psychological constitution of man, the almost constant function of the mind is to give an acceptable explanation of what goes on in the "desire-being", the vital, the most material parts of the mind and the subtlest parts of the body. There is a kind of general complicity in all the parts of the being to give an explanation and even a comfortable justification for everything we do, in order to avoid as far as possible the painful impressions left by the mistakes we commit and undesirable movements. For instance, unless one has undergone or taken up a special training, whatever one does, the mind gives itself a favourable enough explanation of it, so that one is not troubled. Only under the pressure of outer reactions or circumstances or movements coming from other people, does one gradually consent to look less favourably at what one is and does, and begins to ask oneself whether things could not be better than they are.

Spontaneously, the first movement is what is known as self-defense. One puts oneself on one's guard and quite spontaneously one wants a justification... for the smallest things, absolutely insignificant things — it is a normal attitude in life.

And explanations — one gives them to oneself; it is only under the pressure of circumstances that one begins to give them to others or to another, but first one makes oneself very comfortable; first thing: "It was like that, for it had to be like that, and it happened because of this, and...", and it is always the fault of circumstances or other people. And it truly requires an effort

— unless, as I say, one has undergone a discipline, has acquired the habit of doing it automatically — it requires an effort to begin to understand that perhaps things are not like this, that perhaps one has not done exactly what one ought to have done or reacted as one should. And even when one begins to see it, a much greater effort is needed to recognise it... officially.

When one begins to see that one has made a mistake, the first movement of the mind is to push it into the background and to put a cloak in front of it, the cloak of a very fine little explanation, and as long as one is not obliged to show it, one hides it. And this is what I call "lack of mental honesty".

First, one deceives oneself by habit, but even when one begins not to deceive oneself, instinctively there is a movement of trying, trying to deceive oneself in order to feel comfortable. And so a still greater step is necessary once one has understood that one was deceiving oneself, to confess frankly, "Yes, I was deceiving myself."

All these things are so habitual, so automatic, as it were, that you are not even aware of them; but when you begin to want to establish some discipline over your being, you make discoveries which are really tremendously interesting. When you have discovered this, you become aware that you are living constantly in a... the best word is "self-deception", a state of wilful deceit; that is, you deceive yourself spontaneously. It is not that you need to reflect: spontaneously you put a pretty cloak over what you have done so that it doesn't show its true colours... and all this for things which are so insignificant, which have so little importance! It would be understandable, wouldn't it, if recognising your mistake had serious consequences for your very existence — the instinct of self-preservation would make you do it as a protection — but that is not the question, it concerns things which are absolutely unimportant, of no consequence at all except that of having to tell yourself, "I have made a mistake."

This means that an effort is needed in order to be mentally

sincere. There must be an effort, there must be a discipline. Of course, I am not speaking of those who tell lies in order not to be caught, for everybody knows that this should not be done. Besides, the most stupid lies are the most useless, for they are so flagrant that they can't deceive anyone. Such examples occur constantly; you catch someone doing something wrong and tell him, "That's how it is"; he gives a silly explanation which nobody can understand, nobody can accept; it is silly but he gives it in the hope of shielding himself. It is spontaneous, you see, but he knows this is not done. But the other kind of deception is much more spontaneous and it is so habitual that one is not aware of it. So, when we speak of mental honesty, we speak of something which is acquired by a very constant and sustained effort.

You catch yourself, don't you, you suddenly catch yourself in the act of giving yourself somewhere in your head or here (*Mother indicates the heart*), here it is more serious... giving a very favourable little explanation. And only when you can get a grip on yourself, there, hold fast and look at yourself clearly in the face and say, "Do you think it is like that?", then, if you are very courageous and put a very strong pressure, in the end you tell yourself, "Yes, I know very well that it is not like that!"

It sometimes takes years. Time must pass, one must have changed much within oneself, one's vision of things must have become different, one must be in a different condition, in a different relation with circumstances, in order to see clearly, completely, how far one was deceiving oneself — and at that moment one was convinced that one was sincere.

(*Silence*)

It is probable that perfect sincerity can only come when one rises above this sphere of falsehood that is life as we know it on earth, mental life, even the higher mental life.

When one springs up into the higher sphere, into the world

of Truth, one will be able to see things as they truly are, and seeing them as they are, one will be able to live them in their truth. Then all falsehoods will naturally crumble. And since the favourable explanations will no longer have any purpose, they will disappear, for there will be nothing left to explain.

Things will be self-evident, Truth will shine through all forms, the possibility of error will disappear.

28 May 1958

"It is quite true that to a surface view Life seems only an operation of Matter, Mind an activity of Life, and it might seem to follow that what we call the soul or spirit is only a power of mentality, soul a fine form of Mind, spirituality a high activity of the embodied mental being. But this is a superficial view of things due to the thought's concentrating on the appearance and process and not looking at what lies behind the process. One might as well on the same lines have concluded that electricity is only a product or operation of water and cloud matter, because it is in such a field that lightning emerges; but a deeper inquiry has shown that both cloud and water have, on the contrary, the energy of electricity as their foundation, their constituent power or energy-substance: that which seems to be a result is, — in its reality, though not in its form, — the origin; the effect is in the essence pre-existent to the apparent cause, the principle of the emergent activity precedent to its present field of action. So it is throughout evolutionary Nature; Matter could not have become animate if the principle of Life had not been there constituting Matter and emerging as a phenomenon of Life-in-Matter; Life-in-Matter could not have begun to feel, perceive, think, reason, if the principle of Mind had not been there behind life and substance, constituting it as its field of operation and emergent in the phenomenon of a thinking life and body: so too spirituality emerging in Mind is the sign of a power which itself has founded and constituted life, mind and body and is now emerging as a spiritual being in a living and thinking body. How far this emergence will go, whether it will become dominant and transform its instrument,

is a subsequent question; but what is necessary first to posit is the existence of Spirit as something else than Mind and greater than Mind, spirituality as something other than mentality and the spiritual being therefore as something distinct from the mental being: Spirit is a final evolutionary emergence because it is the original involutionary element and factor. Evolution is an inverse action of the involution: what is an ultimate and last derivation in the involution is the first to appear in the evolution; what was original and primal in the involution is in the evolution the last and supreme emergence."

The Life Divine, SABCL, Vol. 19, pp. 852–53

Today I have been asked to speak to you about the Avatar.

The first thing I have to say is that Sri Aurobindo has written on this subject and the person who has asked me the question would do well to begin by reading what Sri Aurobindo has written.

I shall not speak to you about that, for it is better to read it for yourself.

But I could speak to you of a very old tradition, more ancient than the two known lines of spiritual and occult tradition, that is, the Vedic and Chaldean lines; a tradition which seems to have been at the origin of these two known traditions, in which it is said that when, as a result of the action of the adverse forces — known in the Hindu tradition as the Asuras — the world, instead of developing according to its law of Light and inherent consciousness, was plunged into the darkness, inconscience and ignorance that we know, the Creative Power implored the Supreme Origin, asking him for a special intervention which could save this corrupted universe; and in reply to this prayer there was emanated from the Supreme Origin a special Entity, of Love and Consciousness, who cast himself directly into the most inconscient matter to begin there the work of awakening it to the original Consciousness and Love.

In the old narratives this Being is described as stretched out in a deep sleep at the bottom of a very dark cave, and in his sleep there emanated from him prismatic rays of light which gradually spread into the Inconscience and embedded themselves in all the elements of this Inconscience to begin there the work of Awakening.

If one consciously enters into this Inconscient, one can still see there this same marvellous Being, still in deep sleep, continuing his work of emanation, spreading his Light; and he will continue to do it until the Inconscience is no longer inconscient, until Darkness disappears from the world — and the whole creation awakens to the Supramental Consciousness.

And it is remarkable that this wonderful Being strangely resembles the one whom I saw in vision one day, the Being who is at the other extremity, at the confines of form and the Formless. But that one was in a golden, crimson glory, whereas in his sleep the other Being was of a shining diamond whiteness emanating opalescent rays.

In fact, this is the origin of all Avatars. He is, so to say, the first universal Avatar who, gradually, has assumed more and more conscious bodies and finally manifested in a kind of recognised line of Beings who have descended *directly* from the Supreme to perfect this work of preparing the universe so that, through a continuous progression, it may become ready to receive and manifest the supramental Light in its entirety.

In every country, every tradition, the event has been presented in a special way, with different limitations, different details, particular features, but truly speaking, the origin of all these stories is the same, and that is what we could call a direct, conscious intervention of the Supreme in the darkest matter, without going through all the intermediaries, in order to awaken this Matter to the receptivity of the Divine Forces.

The intervals separating these various incarnations seem to become shorter and shorter, as if, to the extent that Matter

became more and more ready, the action could accelerate and become more and more rapid in its movement, more and more conscious too, more and more effective and decisive.

And it will go on multiplying and intensifying until the entire universe becomes the total Avatar of the Supreme.

4 June 1958

"At first this truth of the spirit and of spirituality is not self-evident to the mind; man becomes mentally aware of his soul as something other than his body, superior to his normal mind and life, but he has no clear sense of it, only a feeling of some of its effects on his nature. As these effects take a mental form or a life-form, the difference is not firmly and trenchantly drawn, the soul-perception does not acquire a distinct and assured independence. Very commonly indeed, a complex of half-effects of the psychic pressure on the mental and vital parts, a formation mixed with mental aspiration and vital desires, is mistaken for the soul, just as the separative ego is taken for the self, although the self in its true being is universal as well as individual in its essence, — or just as a mixture of mental aspiration and vital enthusiasm and ardour uplifted by some kind of strong or high belief or self-dedication or altruistic eagerness is mistaken for spirituality. But this vagueness and these confusions are inevitable as a temporary stage of the evolution which, because ignorance is its starting-point and the whole stamp of our first nature, must necessarily begin with an imperfect intuitive perception and an instinctive urge or seeking without any acquired experience or clear knowledge. Even the formations which are the first effects of the perception or urge or the first indices of a spiritual evolution, must inevitably be of this incomplete and tentative nature. But the error so created comes very much in the way of a true understanding, and it must therefore be emphasised that spirituality is not a high intellectuality, not idealism, not an ethical turn of mind or moral purity and austerity, not religiosity or an ardent and

exalted emotional fervour, not even a compound of all these excellent things; a mental belief, creed or faith, an emotional aspiration, a regulation of conduct according to a religious or ethical formula are not spiritual achievement and experience. These things are of considerable value to mind and life; they are of value to the spiritual evolution itself as preparatory movements disciplining, purifying or giving a suitable form to the nature; but they still belong to the mental evolution, — the beginning of a spiritual realisation, experience, change is not yet there. Spirituality is in its essence an awakening to the inner reality of our being, to a spirit, self, soul which is other than our mind, life and body, an inner aspiration to know, to feel, to be that, to enter into contact with the greater Reality beyond and pervading the universe which inhabits also our own being, to be in communion with It and union with It, and a turning, a conversion, a transformation of our whole being as a result of the aspiration, the contact, the union, a growth or waking into a new becoming or new being, a new self, a new nature."

The Life Divine, SABCL, Vol. 19, pp. 856–57

In fact, so long as there is any doubt or hesitation, so long as one asks oneself the question of whether one has or hasn't realised this eternal soul in oneself, it proves that the *true* contact has not taken place. For, when the phenomenon occurs, it brings with it an inexpressible something, so new and so definitive, that doubt and questioning are no longer possible. It is truly, in the absolute sense of the phrase, a new birth.

You become a new person, and whatever may be the path or the difficulties of the path afterwards, that feeling never leaves you. It is not even something — like many other experiences — which withdraws, passes into the background, leaving you externally with a kind of vague memory to which it is difficult to cling, whose remembrance grows faint, blurred — it is not that.

You *are* a new person and definitively that, whatever happens. And even all the incapacity of the mind, all the difficulties of the vital, all the inertia of the physical are unable to change this new state — a new state which makes a *decisive* break in the life of the consciousness. The being one was before and the being one is after, are no longer the same. The position one has in the universe and in relation to it, in life and in relation to it, in understanding and in relation to it, is no longer the same: it is a true reversal which can never be undone again. That is why when people tell me, "I would like to know whether I am in contact with my soul or not", I say, "If you ask the question, that is enough to prove that you are not. You don't need an answer, you are giving it to yourself." When it is *that*, it is that, and then it is finished, it is no longer anything else.

And since we are speaking of that, I shall remind you of what Sri Aurobindo has said, repeated, written, affirmed and said over and over again, that his yoga, the integral yoga, can begin *only after* that experience, not before.

So, one must not cherish any illusions and fancy that one can begin to know what the supermind is and form any idea of it or assess it in any way, however minimal, before having had *that* experience.

Therefore, if you want to advance on the path, you must very modestly start on your way towards the new birth, first, and realise it before cherishing the illusion that you can have supramental experiences.

To console you I may tell you that by the very fact that you live on earth at this time — whether you are conscious of it or not, even whether you want it or not — you are absorbing with the air you breathe this new supramental substance which is now spreading in the earth atmosphere. And it is preparing things in you which will manifest *very suddenly*, as soon as you have taken the decisive step.

(*Silence*)

Whether this will help you to take the decisive step or not is another question which remains to be studied, for the experiences which are occurring and will occur more and more frequently now, being of a radically new kind, we can't know beforehand what is going to happen; we must study, and after a thorough study we shall be able to say with certainty whether this supramental substance makes the work of new birth easier or not.... I shall tell you this a little later. For the moment it is better not to rely on these things and, very simply, to start on your way to be born into the spiritual life.

When this happens to you, almost all the questions you ask yourself or ask me will be solved.

And anyway, your attitude to life will be *so* different that you will understand what is meant when one speaks of living spiritually. And at that moment you will also understand a *great* thing, a very great thing: how to live without ego.

Until then, you cannot understand it. The whole of life is so dependent on the ego that it seems absolutely impossible to live and act except with or by the ego, but after this new birth you can look at the ego with a smile and say to it, "My friend, I don't need you any more."

This is also one of the results which brings you a very decisive sense of liberation.

11 June 1958

"When there is the decisive emergence, one sign of it is the status or action in us of an inherent, intrinsic, self-existent consciousness which knows itself by the mere fact of being, knows all that is in itself in the same way, by identity with it, begins even to see all that to our mind seems external in the same manner, by a movement of identity or by an intrinsic direct consciousness which envelops, penetrates, enters into its object, discovers itself in the object, is aware in it of something that is not mind or life or body. There is, then, evidently a spiritual consciousness which is other than the mental, and it testifies to the existence of a spiritual being in us which is other than our surface mental personality."

The Life Divine, SABCL, Vol. 19, p. 855

Sweet Mother, is there a spiritual being in everybody?

That depends on what we call "being". If for "being" we substitute "presence", yes, there is a spiritual presence in everyone. If we call "being" an organised entity, fully conscious of itself, independent, and having the power of asserting itself and ruling the rest of the nature — no! The possibility of this independent and all-powerful being is in everybody, but the realisation is the result of long efforts which sometimes extend over many lives.

In everyone, even at the very beginning, this spiritual presence, this inner light is there.... In fact, it is everywhere. I have seen it many a time in certain animals. It is like a shining point which is the basis of a certain control and protection, something which, even in half-consciousness, makes possible a certain harmony with the rest of creation so that irreparable catastrophes may not be constant and general. Without this presence the

disorder created by the violences and passions of the vital would be so great that at any moment they could bring about a general catastrophe, a sort of total destruction which would prevent the progress of Nature. That presence, that spiritual light — which could almost be called a spiritual consciousness — is within each being and all things, and because of it, in spite of all discordance, all passion, all violence, there is a minimum of general harmony which allows Nature's work to be accomplished.

And this presence becomes quite obvious in the human being, even the most rudimentary. Even in the most monstrous human being, in one who gives the impression of being an incarnation of a devil or a monster, there is something within exercising a sort of irresistible control — even in the worst, some things are impossible. And without this presence, if the being were controlled exclusively by the adverse forces, the forces of the vital, this impossibility would not exist.

Each time a wave of these monstrous adverse forces sweeps over the earth, one feels that nothing can ever stop the disorder and horror from spreading, and always, at a certain time, unexpectedly and inexplicably a control intervenes, and the wave is arrested, the catastrophe is not total. And this is because of the Presence, the supreme Presence, in matter.

But only in a few exceptional beings and after a long, very long work of preparation extending over many, many lives does this Presence change into a conscious, independent, fully organised being, all-powerful master of his dwelling-place, conscious enough, powerful enough, to be able to control not only this dwelling but what surrounds it and in a field of radiation and action that is more and more extensive... and effective.

18 June 1958

"There are four main lines which Nature has followed in her attempt to open up the inner being, — religion, occultism, spiritual thought and an inner spiritual realisation and experience: the three first are approaches, the last is the decisive avenue of entry. All these four powers have worked by a simultaneous action, more or less connected, sometimes in a variable collaboration, sometimes in dispute with each other, sometimes in a separate independence. Religion has admitted an occult element in its ritual, ceremony, sacraments; it has leaned upon spiritual thinking, deriving from it sometimes a creed or theology, sometimes its supporting spiritual philosophy, — the former, ordinarily, is the occidental method, the latter the oriental: but spiritual experience is the final aim and achievement of religion, its sky and summit. But also religion has sometimes banned occultism or reduced its own occult element to a minimum; it has pushed away the philosophic mind as a dry intellectual alien, leaned with all its weight on creed and dogma, pietistic emotion and fervour and moral conduct; it has reduced to a minimum or dispensed with spiritual realisation and experience. Occultism has sometimes put forward a spiritual aim as its goal, and followed occult knowledge and experience as an approach to it, formulated some kind of mystic philosophy: but more often it has confined itself to occult knowledge and practice without any spiritual vistas; it has turned to thaumaturgy or mere magic or even deviated into diabolism. Spiritual philosophy has very usually leaned on religion as its support or its way to experience; it has been the outcome of realisation and experience or built its structures as

an approach to it: but it has also rejected all aid,—or all impediment,—of religion and proceeded in its own strength, either satisfied with mental knowledge or confident to discover its own path of experience and effective discipline. Spiritual experience has used all the three means as a starting-point, but it has also dispensed with them all, relying on its own pure strength: discouraging occult knowledge and powers as dangerous lures and entangling obstacles, it has sought only the pure truth of the spirit; dispensing with philosophy, it has arrived instead through the heart's fervour or a mystic inward spiritualisation; putting behind it all religious creed, worship and practice and regarding them as an inferior stage or first approach, it has passed on, leaving behind it all these supports, nude of all these trappings, to the sheer contact of the spiritual Reality. All these variations were necessary; the evolutionary endeavour of Nature has experimented on all lines in order to find her true way and her whole way towards the supreme consciousness and the integral knowledge.

"For each of these means or approaches corresponds to something in our total being and therefore to something necessary to the total aim of her evolution. There are four necessities of man's self-expansion if he is not to remain this being of the surface ignorance seeking obscurely after the truth of things and collecting and systematising fragments and sections of knowledge, the small limited and half-competent creature of the cosmic Force which he now is in his phenomenal nature. He must know himself and discover and utilise all his potentialities: but to know himself and the world completely he must go behind his own and its exterior, he must dive deep below his own mental surface and the physical surface of Nature. This he can only do by knowing his inner mental, vital, physical and psychic being and its

powers and movements and the universal laws and processes of the occult Mind and Life which stand behind the material front of the universe: that is the field of occultism, if we take the word in its widest significance. He must know also the hidden Power or Powers that control the world: if there is a Cosmic Self or Spirit or a Creator, he must be able to enter into relation with It or Him and be able to remain in whatever contact or communion is possible, get into some kind of tune with the master Beings of the universe or with the universal Being and its universal will or a supreme Being and His supreme will, follow the law It gives him and the assigned or revealed aim of his life and conduct, raise himself towards the highest height that It demands of him in his life now or in his existence hereafter; if there is no such universal or supreme Spirit or Being, he must know what there is and how to lift himself to it out of his present imperfection and impotence. This approach is the aim of religion: its purpose is to link the human with the Divine and in so doing sublimate the thought and life and flesh so that they may admit the rule of the soul and spirit. But this knowledge must be something more than a creed or a mystic revelation; his thinking mind must be able to accept it, to correlate it with the principle of things and the observed truth of the universe: this is the work of philosophy, and in the field of the truth of the spirit it can only be done by a spiritual philosophy, whether intellectual in its method or intuitive. But all knowledge and endeavour can reach its fruition only if it is turned into experience and has become a part of the consciousness and its established operations; in the spiritual field all this religious, occult or philosophical knowledge and endeavour must, to bear fruition, end in an opening up of the spiritual consciousness, in experiences that found and continually heighten, expand

> *and enrich that consciousness and in the building of a life and action that is in conformity with the truth of the spirit: this is the work of spiritual realisation and experience."*
>
> *The Life Divine, SABCL, Vol. 19, pp. 860–62*

One point is very remarkable — I don't remember whether Sri Aurobindo speaks about it in what follows — but among the four activities or realisations he mentions — religion, occultism, spiritual philosophy and spiritual experience — which are necessary for the development and transformation of man, all are not equally accessible to humanity.

The one which can be practised and, one might say, "understood" — although it is certainly not an "understanding" — by the greatest number of human beings — those who live almost exclusively in the physical consciousness — is the religious method, precisely because it is based on fixed creeds and practices. Simply by an act of faith or a collective suggestion — above all a collective suggestion — many human beings who have not yet reached any considerable inner development can take up the path of religion.

For occultism we must already have come to a second stage of development and be more conscious in the vital world to be able to come into contact with the play of forces, which is indispensable in order to manipulate them.

As for spiritual philosophy, only the few who have a fairly complete mental development and are fully conscious on the intellectual plane, can usefully adopt this method; otherwise it is a dead letter for all those who don't have an ability for mental gymnastics and so cannot follow all the acrobatics of the mind.

And finally, Sri Aurobindo has told us somewhere in *The Life Divine* that to follow the path of spiritual experience, one must have within oneself a "spiritual being", one must be "twice born" as it is said, for if one doesn't have a spiritual being within,

which is at least on the point of becoming self-aware, one may try to imitate these experiences but it will only be crude imitation or hypocrisy, it won't be a reality.

Therefore, in order to follow these four paths simultaneously and to practise them with an integral benefit for the being, one must already be a complete individual, capable of having a conscious life in the four principal elements of human and spiritual nature.

Of course, this inner development is not always apparent and we may meet someone who has within him a conscious spiritual entity, ready for the most beautiful experiences, though externally he seems quite crude and incomplete.

Nor is it necessary to follow this development in the order in which it has been mentioned, but if we want our realisation to be integral and to arrive at a total transformation of our being, we must be able to use the essence of what each of these methods can bring.

The psychic or spiritual consciousness gives you the deep inner realisation, contact with the Divine, liberation from external fetters; but for this liberation to be effective, for it to have an action on the rest of the being, the mind must be open enough to be able to hold the spiritual light of Knowledge, the vital must be powerful enough to handle the forces behind appearances and dominate them, and the physical should be disciplined, organised enough to be able to *express* the deep experience, in the movements of each day and each moment, and live it integrally.

If one of these things is lacking, the result is not complete. One can make light of this thing or that under the pretext that it is not the most important, the central Thing — and to neglect outer things certainly cannot prevent you from entering into spiritual communion with the Supreme, but that is good only for a flight from life.

If we are to be total, complete beings, to have an integral realisation, we should be able to express our spiritual experience mentally, vitally and physically. And the more our expression is

perfect, executed by a complete and perfect being, the more integral and perfect will our realisation be.

For someone who wants to follow the integral yoga nothing is useless and nothing must be neglected.... The main thing is to know how to put each thing in its place and to hand over the government to what truly has the right to govern.

25 June 1958

"In the very nature of things all evolution must proceed at first by a slow unfolding; for each new principle that evolves its powers has to make its way out of an involution in Inconscience and Ignorance. It has a difficult task in pulling itself out of the involution, out of the hold of the obscurity of the original medium, against the pull and strains, the instinctive opposition and obstruction of the Inconscience and the hampering mixture and blind obstinate retardations of the Ignorance. Nature affirms at first a vague urge and tendency which is a sign of the push of the occult, subliminal, submerged reality towards the surface; there are then small half-suppressed hints of the thing that is to be, imperfect beginnings, crude elements, rudimentary appearances, small, insignificant, hardly recognisable quanta. Afterwards there are small or large formations; a more characteristic and recognisable quality begins to show itself, first partially, here and there or in a low intensity, then more vivid, more formative; finally, there is the decisive emergence, a reversal of the consciousness, the beginning of the possibility of its radical change: but still much has to be done in every direction, a long and difficult growth towards perfection lies before the evolutionary endeavour. The thing done has not only to be confirmed, secured against relapse and the downward gravitation, against failure and extinction, but opened out into all the fields of its possibilities, its totality of entire self-achievement, its utmost height, subtlety, riches, wideness; it has to become dominant, all-embracing, comprehensive. This is everywhere the process of Nature and to ignore it is to miss the intention

in her works and get lost in the maze of her procedure."
The Life Divine, SABCL, Vol. 19, pp. 862–63

This seems to be a very exact description of individual development. It is exactly like that. And so you lose patience or lose courage, for you feel that you are not advancing. But when you engage in the development of the body — material, physical development — when you want the physical body to do sadhana, it is exactly like that. You begin by trying out all kinds of things without precision or exactitude, without knowing which end to begin with, and you feel you are groping, searching, going round and round and going nowhere. And then, gradually, one thing comes up and then another, and it is only *very* much later that something like a programme begins to be worked out. And this description Sri Aurobindo gives at the end, when the goal of evolution emerges and becomes perceptible, how much care must be taken for it not to be engulfed once again in the primal Inconscience!

And that is why the work seems... interminable. And yet this is the only way it can be done. The road to be covered between the usual state of the body, the almost total inconscience to which we are accustomed because we are "like that", and the perfect awakening of consciousness, the response of all the cells, all the organs, all the functionings... between the two there seem to be centuries of labour. However, if one has learnt to open, to aspire, give oneself up, and if one can make use of these same movements in the body, teach the cells to do the same thing, then things go much faster. But much faster does not mean fast; it is still a long and slow work. And each time that an element which has not entered the movement of transformation wakes up to enter it, one feels that everything must be started again — all that one believed had been done must be done once more. But it is not true, it is not the same thing that one does again, it is something similar in a new element which was either forgotten or else left aside because it was not ready, and which, now that

it is ready, awakens and wants to take its place. There are many elements like that....

The body seems to you to be something very simple, doesn't it? It is a body, it is "my" body, and after all it has a single form — but it is not like that! There are hundreds of combined entities unaware of each other, all harmonised by something deeper which they do not know, and having a perception of unity only because they are not conscious of the multiplicity of the elements and their divergence.

In fact, this multiplicity and divergence are the cause of most disorders and even illnesses. Something is going well, you have caught the guiding thread, you are following your path, you think you are going to get a result, and then, suddenly, there! — something happens quite unexpectedly, you did not know it was there: it wakes up and insists on joining the march. But it creates a terrible disorder and you must begin everything over again.

The sadhana of all the inner beings, inner domains, has been done by many people, has been explained at length, systematised by some, the stages and paths have been traced out and you go from one stage to another, knowing that it has to be like that; but as soon as you go down into the body, it is like a virgin forest.... And everything is to be done, everything is to be worked out, everything is to be built up. So you must arm yourself with *great* patience, *great* patience, and not think that you are good for nothing because it takes so much time. You must never be despondent, never tell yourself, "Oh! This is not for me!" Everyone can do it, if he puts into it the time, the courage, the endurance and the perseverance that are demanded. But all this is needed. And above all, above all, never lose heart, be ready to begin the same thing again ten times, twenty times, a hundred times — until it is really done.

And one often feels that unless *everything is* done, unless the work is finished, well, it is as if one had done nothing.

9 July 1958

"Religion has opened itself to denial by its claim to determine the truth by divine authority, by inspiration, by a sacrosanct and infallible sovereignty given to it from on high; it has sought to impose itself on human thought, feeling, conduct without discussion or question. This is an excessive and premature claim, although imposed in a way on the religious idea by the imperative and absolute character of the inspirations and illuminations which are its warrant and justification and by the necessity of faith as an occult light and power from the soul amidst the mind's ignorance, doubts, weakness, incertitudes. Faith is indispensable to man, for without it he could not proceed forward in his journey through the Unknown; but it ought not to be imposed, it should come as a free perception or an imperative direction from the inner spirit. A claim to unquestioned acceptance could only be warranted if the spiritual effort had already achieved man's progression to the highest Truth-Consciousness total and integral, free from all ignorant mental and vital mixture. This is the ultimate object before us, but it has not yet been accomplished, and the premature claim has obscured the true work of the religious instinct in man, which is to lead him towards the Divine Reality, to formulate all that he has yet achieved in that direction and to give to each human being a mould of spiritual discipline, a way of seeking, touching, nearing the Divine Truth, a way which is proper to the potentialities of his nature."

The Life Divine, SABCL, Vol. 19, pp. 863–64

Sweet Mother, can faith be increased by personal effort?

Faith is certainly a gift given to us by the Divine Grace. It is like a door suddenly opening upon an eternal truth, through which we can see it, almost touch it.

As in everything else in the ascent of humanity, there is the necessity — especially at the beginning — of personal effort. It is possible that in some exceptional circumstances, for reasons which completely elude our intelligence, faith may come almost accidentally, quite unexpectedly, almost without ever having been solicited, but most frequently it is an answer to a yearning, a need, an aspiration, something in the being that is seeking and longing, even though not in a very conscious and systematic way. But in any case, when faith has been granted, when one has had this sudden inner illumination, in order to preserve it constantly in the active consciousness individual effort is altogether indispensable. One must *hold on* to one's faith, *will* one's faith; one must seek it, cultivate it, protect it.

In the human mind there is a morbid and deplorable habit of doubt, argument, scepticism. *This* is where human effort must be put in: the refusal to admit them, the refusal to listen to them and still more the refusal to follow them. No game is more dangerous than playing mentally with doubt and scepticism. They are not only enemies, they are terrible pitfalls, and once one falls into them, it becomes tremendously difficult to pull oneself out.

Some people think it is a very great mental elegance to play with ideas, to discuss them, to contradict their faith; they think that this gives them a very superior attitude, that in this way they are above "superstitions" and "ignorance"; but if you listen to suggestions of doubt and scepticism, *then* you fall into the grossest ignorance and stray away from the right path. You enter into confusion, error, a maze of contradictions.... You are not always sure you will be able to get out of it. You go so far away from the inner truth that you lose sight of it and sometimes lose too all possible contact with your soul.

Certainly a personal effort is needed to preserve one's faith, to let it grow within. Later — much later — one day, looking

back, we may see that everything that happened, even what seemed to us the worst, was a Divine Grace to make us advance on the way; and then we become aware that the personal effort too was a grace. But before reaching that point, one has to advance much, to struggle much, sometimes even to suffer a great deal.

To sit down in inert passivity and say, "If I am to have faith I shall have it, the Divine will give it to me", is an attitude of laziness, of unconsciousness and almost of bad-will.

For the inner flame to burn, one must feed it; one must watch over the fire, throw into it the fuel of all the errors one wants to get rid of, all that delays the progress, all that darkens the path. If one doesn't feed the fire, it smoulders under the ashes of one's unconsciousness and inertia, and then, not years but lives, centuries will pass before one reaches the goal.

One must watch over one's faith as one watches over the birth of something *infinitely* precious, and protect it very carefully from everything that can impair it.

In the ignorance and darkness of the beginning, faith is the most direct expression of the Divine Power which comes to fight and conquer.

16 July 1958

"Religion's real business is to prepare man's mind, life and bodily existence for the spiritual consciousness to take it up; it has to lead him to that point where the inner spiritual light begins fully to emerge. It is at this point that religion must learn to subordinate itself, not to insist on its outer characters, but give full scope to the inner spirit itself to develop its own truth and reality. In the meanwhile it has to take up as much of man's mentality, vitality, physicality as it can and give all his activities a turn towards the spiritual direction, the revelation of a spiritual meaning in them, the imprint of a spiritual refinement, the beginning of a spiritual character. It is in this attempt that the errors of religion come in, for they are caused by the very nature of the matter with which it is dealing, — that inferior stuff invades the very forms that are meant to serve as intermediaries between the spiritual and the mental, vital or physical consciousness, and often it diminishes, degrades and corrupts them: but it is in this attempt that lies religion's greatest utility as an intercessor between spirit and nature. Truth and error live always together in the human evolution and the truth is not to be rejected because of its accompanying errors, though these have to be eliminated, — often a difficult business and, if crudely done, resulting in surgical harm inflicted on the body of religion; for what we see as error is very frequently the symbol or a disguise or a corruption or malformation of a truth which is lost in the brutal radicality of the operation, — the truth is cut out along with the error. Nature herself very commonly permits the good corn and the tares and weeds to grow together for a long time,

because only so is her own growth, her free evolution possible."

The Life Divine, SABCL, Vol. 19, pp. 864–65

Sweet Mother, is religion a necessity in the life of the ordinary man?

In the life of societies it is a necessity, for it serves as a corrective to collective egoism which, without this control, could take on excessive proportions.

The level of collective consciousness is always lower than the individual level. It is very noticeable, for example, that when men gather in a group or collect in great numbers, the level of consciousness falls a great deal. The consciousness of crowds is much lower than individual consciousness, and the collective consciousness of society is certainly lower than the consciousness of the individuals constituting it.

There it is a necessity. In ordinary life, an individual, whether he knows it or not, always has a religion but the object of his religion is sometimes of a very inferior kind.... The god he worships may be the god of success or the god of money or the god of power, or simply a family god: the god of children, the god of the family, the god of the ancestors. There is always a religion. The quality of the religion is very different according to the individual, but it is difficult for a human being to live and to go on living, to survive in life without having something like a rudiment of an ideal which serves as the *centre* for his existence. Most of the time he doesn't know it and if he were asked what his ideal is, he would be unable to formulate it; but he has one, vaguely, something that seems to him the most precious thing in life.

For most people, it is security, for instance: living in security, being in conditions where one is sure of being able to go on existing. That is one of the great "aims", one might say,

one of the great motives of human effort. There are people for whom comfort is the important thing; for others it is pleasure, amusement.

All that is very low and one would not be inclined to give it the name of an ideal, but it is truly a form of religion, something which may seem to be worth consecrating one's life to.... There are many influences which seek to impose themselves on human beings by using that as a basis. The feeling of insecurity, uncertainty, is a kind of tool, a means used by political or religious groups to influence individuals. They play on these ideas.

Every political or social idea is a sort of lower expression of an ideal which is a rudimentary religion. As soon as there is a faculty of thought, there is necessarily an aspiration for something higher than the most brutal daily existence from minute to minute, and this is what gives the energy and possibility of living.

Of course, one could say that it is the same thing for individuals as for collectivities, that their value is exactly proportionate to the value of their ideal, their religion, that is, of the thing they make the summit of their existence.

Of course, when we speak of religion, if we mean the recognised religions, truly, everyone has his own religion, whether he knows it or not, even when he belongs to the great religions that have a name and a history. It is certain that even if one learns the dogmas by heart and complies with a prescribed ritual, everybody understands and acts in his own way, and only the name of the religion is the same, but this same religion is not the same for all the individuals who think they are practising it.

We can say that without some expression of this aspiration for the Unknown and the highest, human existence would be very difficult. If there were not at the heart of every being the hope of something better — of whatever kind — he would have difficulty in finding the energy needed to go on living.

(*Silence*)

But as very few individuals are capable of thinking freely, it is much easier to join a religion, accept it, adopt it and become a part of that religious collectivity than to formulate one's own cult for oneself. So, apparently, one is this or that, but in fact it is only an appearance.

23 July 1958

Mother, how can the faculty of intuition be developed?

There are different kinds of intuition, and we carry these capacities within us. They are always active to some extent but we don't notice them because we don't pay enough attention to what is going on in us.

Behind the emotions, deep within the being, in a consciousness seated somewhere near the level of the solar plexus, there is a sort of prescience, a kind of capacity for foresight, but not in the form of ideas: rather in the form of feelings, almost a perception of sensations. For instance, when one is going to decide to do something, there is sometimes a kind of uneasiness or inner refusal, and usually, if one listens to this deeper indication, one realises that it was justified.

In other cases there is something that urges, indicates, insists — I am not speaking of impulses, you understand, of all the movements which come from the vital and much lower still — indications which are behind the feelings, which come from the affective part of the being; there too one can receive a fairly sure indication of the thing to be done. These are forms of intuition or of a higher instinct which can be cultivated by observation and also by studying the results. Naturally, it must be done very sincerely, objectively, without prejudice. If one wants to see things in a particular way and at the same time practise this observation, it is all useless. One must do it as if one were looking at what is happening from outside oneself, in someone else.

It is one form of intuition and perhaps the first one that usually manifests.

There is also another form but that one is much more difficult to observe because for those who are accustomed to think,

to act by reason — not by impulse but by reason — to reflect before doing anything, there is an extremely swift process from cause to effect in the half-conscious thought which prevents you from seeing the line, the whole line of reasoning and so you don't think that it is a chain of reasoning, and that is quite deceptive. You have the impression of an intuition but it is not an intuition, it is an extremely rapid subconscious reasoning, which takes up a problem and goes straight to the conclusions. This must not be mistaken for intuition.

In the ordinary functioning of the brain, intuition is something which suddenly falls like a drop of light. If one has the faculty, the beginning of a faculty of mental vision, it gives the impression of something coming from outside or above, like a little impact of a drop of light in the brain, absolutely independent of all reasoning.

This is perceived more easily when one is able to silence one's mind, hold it still and attentive, arresting its usual functioning, as if the mind were changed into a kind of mirror turned towards a higher faculty in a sustained and silent attention. That too one can learn to do. One *must* learn to do it, it is a necessary discipline.

When you have a question to solve, whatever it may be, usually you concentrate your attention here (*pointing between the eyebrows*), at the centre just above the eyes, the centre of the conscious will. But then if you do that, you cannot be in contact with intuition. You can be in contact with the source of the will, of effort, even of a certain kind of knowledge, but in the outer, almost material field; whereas, if you want to contact the intuition, you must keep this (*Mother indicates the forehead*) completely immobile. Active thought must be stopped as far as possible and the entire mental faculty must form — at the top of the head and a little further above if possible — a kind of mirror, very quiet, very still, turned upwards, in silent, very concentrated attention. If you succeed, you can — perhaps not immediately — but you can have the perception of the drops

of light falling upon the mirror from a still unknown region and expressing themselves as a conscious thought which has no connection with all the rest of your thought since you have been able to keep it silent. That is the real beginning of the intellectual intuition.

It is a discipline to be followed. For a long time one may try and not succeed, but as soon as one succeeds in making a "mirror", still and attentive, one always obtains a result, not necessarily with a precise form of thought but always with the sensations of a light coming from above. And then, if one can receive this light coming from above without entering immediately into a whirl of activity, receive it in calm and silence and let it penetrate deep into the being, then after a while it expresses itself either as a luminous thought or as a very precise indication here (*Mother indicates the heart*), in this other centre.

Naturally, first these two faculties must be developed; then, as soon as there is any result, one must observe the result, as I said, and see the connection with what is happening, the consequences: see, observe very attentively what has come in, what may have caused a distortion, what one has added by way of more or less conscious reasoning or the intervention of a lower will, also more or less conscious; and it is by a very deep study — indeed, almost of every moment, in any case daily and very frequent — that one succeeds in developing one's intuition. It takes a long time. It takes a long time and there are ambushes: one can deceive oneself, take for intuitions subconscious wills which try to manifest, indications given by impulses one has refused to receive openly, indeed all sorts of difficulties. One must be prepared for that. But if one persists, one is sure to succeed.

And there comes a time when one feels a kind of inner guidance, something which is leading one very perceptibly in all that one does. But then, for the guidance to have its maximum power, one must naturally add to it a conscious surrender: one must be sincerely determined to follow the indication given by

the higher force. If one does that, then... one saves years of study, one can seize the result extremely rapidly. If one also does that, the result comes very rapidly. But for that, it must be done with sincerity and... a kind of inner spontaneity. If one wants to try without this surrender, one may succeed — as one can also succeed in developing one's personal will and making it into a very considerable power — but that takes a very long time and one meets many obstacles and the result is very precarious; one must be very persistent, obstinate, persevering, and one is sure to succeed, but only after a great labour.

Make your surrender with a sincere, complete self-giving, and you will go ahead at full speed, you will go much faster — but you must not do this calculatingly, for that spoils everything!

(*Silence*)

Moreover, whatever you may want to do in life, one thing is absolutely indispensable and at the basis of *everything*, the capacity of concentrating the attention. If you are able to gather together the rays of attention and consciousness on one point and can maintain this concentration with a persistent will, *nothing* can resist it — whatever it may be, from the most material physical development to the highest spiritual one. But this discipline must be followed in a constant and, it may be said, imperturbable way; not that you should always be concentrated on the same thing — that's not what I mean, I mean learning to concentrate.

And materially, for studies, sports, all physical or mental development, it is absolutely indispensable. And the value of an individual is proportionate to the value of his attention.

And from the spiritual point of view it is still more important. There is *no* spiritual obstacle which can resist a penetrating power of concentration. For instance, the discovery of the psychic being, union with the inner Divine, opening to the higher spheres, *all* can be obtained by an intense and obstinate power of concentration — but one must learn how to do it.

There is nothing in the human or even in the superhuman field, to which the power of concentration is not the key.

You can be the best athlete, you can be the best student, you can be an artistic, literary or scientific genius, you can be the greatest saint with that faculty. And everyone has in himself a tiny little beginning of it — it is given to everybody, but people do not cultivate it.

30 July 1958

Sweet Mother, what kind of forces can be called up by using the planchette, and how is it done?

Oh! Oh!... Do you mean automatic writing?

Yes, Mother.

That depends on the people who do it. Sometimes there are no forces at all! It is the mental and vital vibrations of the people who use the planchette, and it is their own subconscious ideas which they bring up, ninety-eight times out of a hundred.[1] If they are in contact with invisible entities, it may be all sorts of things but nothing very advisable!

Almost with certainty it could be said that it is not what people think it is, in the sense that most often they try to evoke what they call the "spirit" of a dead person, a relative or a friend or someone they loved and with whom they wish to remain in touch; and besides, they ask them the most foolish questions. Fortunately they don't succeed in disturbing them....

From this point of view one can say that if you had a relation of deep and sincere love with someone who has passed away, left his body, and if you are calm and strong enough yourself, this person may choose to take shelter vitally in your atmosphere — the atmosphere of the one he loves — for a more or less long period. In this case it means that the relation was very close, very intimate, and if you are not altogether materialistic to the point of not having any direct mental perception, you can remain in mental contact with this person, in communication with him.

[1] Later Mother added the following remark: "I say ninety times out of a hundred, for there are exceptions — I know of some — but they are so rare that it is better not to speak about them."

It is a rather exceptional case, for usually if your atmosphere is calm and strong enough to be able to truly serve as a protection, the person who has left his body enters into a deep rest there, and it is not at all good to disturb it; and the best thing you can do is to enfold this person with your love and leave him in peace.

Therefore, even if it were possible to enter into communication with him by this means, which I would call very crude, it would be improper to do so. But usually, people who have the capacity, the faculties required to serve as a shelter for some time, a transitional shelter for those who have gone, do not have this ridiculous idea of disturbing the rest of the one they love by tapping on a planchette... fortunately!

But those who indulge in this exercise, an exercise of unhealthy curiosity, get what they deserve; for the atmosphere we live in is filled with a great number of small vital entities which are born of unsatisfied desires, vital movements of a very low type, also the decomposition of larger beings of the vital world; indeed, it is swarming with them, you see. It is surely a protection that most people do not see what is going on in this vital atmosphere, for it is not especially pleasant; but if they have the presumption to want to come into contact with it and set about trying automatic writing or table-turning or... indeed, anything of this kind, out of an unhealthy curiosity, well, what happens is that one of these small entities or several of them have fun at their expense and collect all the necessary indications from their subconscious mind and then furnish these things to them as clear proofs that they are the person who has been called!

I could write a book for you with all the examples I have known of these stories, for people are very proud of doing things like this and immediately write them down, giving "proofs" of the truth of the experience which are so ridiculous that they should be enough to show them that someone was making fun of them! I had another instance, very recently, of somebody who fancied that he had entered into contact with Sri Aurobindo

and was receiving sensational revelations from him — that was comical in the extreme.

But anyway, as a rule, it is — oh! most often — it is your own forces, your subconscious mental and vital forces which you put into the planchette — and you make sensational revelations to yourself! One can do many things in this way.... Once I wanted to prove to people that what they were evoking was nothing but themselves; so I had a little fun, simply with a concentration of the will, tapping the furniture, making tables walk and, well!... As for automatic writing, you only have to withdraw your conscious will into yourself, to let your hand go — just like this (*gesture*) — and leave it free, and then the hand will begin to make movements; but there is a little part in you which is interested and would like these movements to make sense and this little part appeals to the subconscious mind which begins to make sensational revelations. Indeed, it is a booby-trap, all this business, unless one does it scientifically — but then, scientifically, one realises that it leads to nothing, nothing at all except just passing your time in what you consider an interesting way.

In some cases vital entities really get hold of you, and there it is dangerous. But fortunately these cases are not very frequent. Then it becomes very dangerous.

A very long time ago when I was in France, I knew the case of a man who, through practices of this kind, had put himself into contact with a vital entity. This man happened to be a gambler and he spent his time speculating and playing roulette. He spent part of the year at Monte Carlo playing roulette and the rest of the time he lived in the south of France and speculated on the Stock Exchange. And now, some being was really using him — it was through automatic writing — using him, and for years it gave him absolutely precise, exact indications. When he played roulette it used to tell him, "Bid on this number or this place", and he would win. Naturally he just worshipped this "spirit" which gave him such sensational revelations. And at the Exchange it also told him, "Speculate on this or on that" and

gave him all the indications. This man became colossally rich. He used to boast to all his friends about the method by which he had grown rich.

Someone put him on his guard, told him, "Be careful, this doesn't look very honest, you should not trust this spirit." He fell out with this person. A few days later he was in Monte Carlo and... He always played for high stakes, you see; since, naturally, he always won and would break the bank, he was much feared. Then the spirit told him, "Stake everything, *everything* you have on this...." He did, and at a single stroke lost everything! And yet, he still had some money left from his Stock Exchange speculations. He said to himself, "It is bad luck." Again he received a very precise indication, "Do this", as usual. And he did it — he was completely cleaned out! And to finish the job, the spirit told him, just for the fun of it, "Now, you are going to commit suicide. Put a bullet through your head". And he was so much under its influence, he did so.... That's the end of the story. And this is an authentic story. So, the least one can say is that it is dangerous, it is much better not to indulge in occupations of this kind.

No! Either they are rather senseless amusements or else they are unwholesome occupations.

Mother, Sri Aurobindo wrote the book Yogic Sadhan *in this way...*

No, no! It is not that at all. You must not confuse things. That was something different. Sri Aurobindo *knew* with whom he was in contact, he did it deliberately and chose the person he was in touch with, and that had nothing to do with the little entities I am speaking about, nothing at all, at all. It was something that took place in the mental world, directly; you must not confuse things. This has no connection, none at all.

(*Silence*)

One can, if one has the knowledge, the control, the power, the ability to go into a certain state of passivity — one can very easily lend one's hand to someone, deliberately, knowing who it is and acting on a higher plane, but that already demands a great consciousness and a great self-mastery, which is not within everybody's reach. One must have quite a considerable inner development to be able to see whom one is dealing with on a particular plane and willingly lend oneself to the experiment with full knowledge of what one is doing and without losing one's control. Not everybody can play with that. But to work the planchette, one only has to delude oneself enough for it to start working!

What you are telling us now, Mother — does it form part of the occult sciences?

It was simply to make an experiment, that's all.

(*Silence*)

It is not a good way of approach, as a general rule, for in the inner field, in the domain of inner development, this corresponds to the need to read novels. People whose minds are insufficiently developed, whose minds are still in a tamasic state and half inert, need to read novels in order to wake up. It is not the sign of a very commendable state or at any rate a very high one. Well, in the field of inner development this corresponds to the same thing. When one is in a very rudimentary state, when one has no intense inner life, one needs to read novels or to create novels for oneself, and then one indulges in experiments of this kind and believes one is doing very interesting things.... This has the same interest as novels — not even literary novels but cheap romances, those published on the back of newspapers.

Sri Aurobindo told me that some people needed this because their minds were so inert that this shook them and woke them

up a little! Well, that is the same thing. Some people may need to do exercises of this kind to awaken their vital a little, which is sleepy and inert and... this gives them a little interest in life. But still, one can't say that these are very valuable occupations. They are pastimes, amusements.

And this has never served to prove anything to anybody. One could say, "Oh! It is to make you understand that there is an inner life, an invisible life, and it puts you in touch with things you don't see and proves to you that they exist". That is not true.

Unless you have a spiritual *being* within you, capable of awakening and living its own life, all these things teach you nothing at all. I knew some people — one of them especially, who was a man of science, intelligent, a man of real ability; he had studied higher science, become an engineer and held an important position; this man was a member of a society known as "spiritualist", which had found a medium who really had quite exceptional abilities. And he used to attend all the *séances* with the idea of learning, to convince himself and have tangible proofs of the existence of an invisible world, the concrete and real existence of an invisible world. He had seen all that could be seen, under the strictest control, in the most scientific way possible — all the tests were provided for, down to the least detail. He told me about the most extraordinary things he had seen; I held in my hand a piece of something resembling the plastic cloth they make nowadays, which is not woven, a piece of plastic — but in those days there was no plastic, it had not yet been discovered, it was a long time ago — I held it in my hand, a piece, like this, torn, with a small design which was very pretty. He told me how it had happened. When the medium had been put into trance, a person had appeared dressed in a robe of this substance — it was a materialisation; this person had passed in front of him and, like the little brute he was, he had torn off a piece to have a proof, and he kept the piece. The medium screamed — and everything, everything immediately vanished.... But the piece remained in

his hand and he gave it to me. I gave it back to him. He had simply shown it to me, I held it in my hand.

So that was something quite concrete, you see, for he still had the piece; he could not tell himself it was a hallucination. Well, in spite of all this, in spite of the most extraordinary stories which could make a whole book, he did not believe *anything*! He could not explain *anything*. And he wondered who was mad, whether it was himself or the others or... This had not helped his knowledge progress even half a step forward.

One cannot believe these things unless one carries them within oneself.

No external proofs you can have will ever give you any knowledge. When you *yourselves* are inwardly developed, are capable of having a direct and inner contact with these things, then you know what they are, but no material proof — material and of this kind — can give you the knowledge if within you you do not have the *being* capable of having this knowledge.

Therefore, the conclusion is that this kind of experiment is absolutely useless. For those who have an inner being, one day or another, life will see to it that they awaken and will bring them into contact with what they need in order to know.

I consider these things to be an unhealthy curiosity, that's all.

6 August 1958

Sweet Mother, what is the effect and value of collective prayer?

We have already spoken about this, about collective prayers, the use that has been made of them. I believe that it has even been published in the *Bulletin.*

Besides, there are different kinds of collective prayer, just as there are different kinds of collectivities. There is the anonymous mass, the crowd, formed by chance circumstances, without any inner coordination, impelled by the force of circumstance, as for instance when a king or a person who attracts public attention is in a critical situation, either ill or the victim of an accident, and the people gather to obtain news and also to express their feelings; and through chance circumstances people have collected there, that is, there is no inner link except that of the same emotion or interest. There have been cases of crowds spontaneously beginning to pray to ask for the recovery of someone in whom they were specially interested. Of course, these very crowds can gather for a completely different purpose, out of hatred, and their cries are also a sort of prayer, a prayer to the adverse and destructive forces.

Those movements are spontaneous, not organised, unexpected.

There is also the collectivity formed by individuals who have gathered together around an ideal or a teaching or an action they want to carry out, and who have an organising link between them, the link of the same purpose, the same will and the same faith. These can gather in a methodical manner to practise common prayer and meditation, and if their aim is high, their organisation good, their ideal powerful, through their prayers or meditations these groups can have a considerable effect on

world events or on their own inner development and collective progress. These groups are necessarily far superior to others, but they don't have the blind strength of the mobs, the collective action of the crowd. They replace this vehemence, this intensity by the strength of a deliberate and conscious organisation.

At all times there have been on earth groups organised in this way. Some of them have had a historical life, a historical action in the world, but as a rule they have not succeeded better with the crowd, the mass, than exceptional individuals. They have always been suspected and subjected to attacks, persecutions, and often they have also been dissolved in a very brutal, obscure and ignorant way.... There were those semi-religious, semi-chivalric groups, gathered around a belief or rather a creed, with a definite aim, which have had a very interesting history in the world. And certainly, they have done much for collective progress through their individual effort.

There is an ideal organisation which, if fully realised, could create a kind of very powerful unity, composed of elements all having the same aim and the same will and with enough inner development to be able to give a very coherent body to this inner oneness of purpose, motive, aspiration and action.

At all times centres of initiation have tried this, more or less successfully, and this is always mentioned in all occult traditions as an extremely powerful means of action.

If the collective unit could attain the same cohesion as the individual unit, it would multiply the strength and action of the individual.

Usually, if several individuals are brought together, the collective quality of the group is much lower than the individual value of each person taken separately, but with a sufficiently conscious and coordinated organisation, it would be possible, on the contrary, to *multiply* the power of individual action.

13 August 1958

Sweet Mother, in July 1953 you told us that after five years you would give us lessons on spiritual life.[1] *I have brought what you said, Sweet Mother.*

Really! That is interesting!

(*Mother reads the text given by the child*) Has it been printed?

No, Mother.

Oh! I like the last sentence very much!

(*After a silence*) So, what do you expect me to do?... To begin?

Yes, Mother.

But I have already started, haven't I? Even before the five years have passed! It seems that on that day, I... Oh! I *wrote* here — it is something I wrote...

It is written in Conversations,[2] *Sweet Mother.*

There I have written about the confusion made between asceticism and spiritual life, and then I promise that one day I shall speak to you about the confusion people make between what they call God and what I call the Divine.

But I have already spoken to you about that several times, haven't I?

I did not remember my promise but I have kept it without remembering it and even before the day came!

[1] See *Questions and Answers 1953* (15 July 1953).
[2] Presently entitled *Questions and Answers 1929–1931*.

Now, if you ask me a precise question on this subject, I shall see what I can say. What do you want to know about spiritual life?... Do you have a particular question?

You mean you have started the meditations, Mother?

Yes!... And giving you explanations on what I read. We have even begun, in the small class, to meditate on the disciplines which are necessary to lead a spiritual life. And when I took up the reading of the Dhammapada, we read many things leading to the knowledge of spiritual life. But if you have a precise question on a special point, you can ask it, I shall reply.

Sweet Mother, why don't we profit as much as we should by our presence here in the Ashram?

Ah! That is very simple; it is because it is too easy!... When you have to go all round the world to find a teacher, when you have to give up everything to obtain only the first words of a teaching, then this teaching, this spiritual help becomes something very precious, like everything that is difficult to obtain, and you make a great effort to deserve it.

Most of you came here when you were very small, at an age when there can be no question of the spiritual life or spiritual teaching — it would be altogether premature. You have indeed lived in this atmosphere but without even being aware of it; you are accustomed to seeing me, hearing me; I speak to you as one does to all children, I have even played with you as one plays with children; you only have to come and sit here and you hear me speak, you only have to ask me a question and I answer you, I have never refused to say anything to anybody — it is so easy. It is enough to... live — to sleep, to eat, to do exercises and study at school. You live here as you would live anywhere else. And so, you are used to it.

If I had made strict rules, if I had said, "I shall not tell you anything until you have truly made an effort to know it", then perhaps you might have made some effort, but that's not in keeping with my idea. I believe more in the power of the atmosphere and of example than of a rigorous teaching. I count more on something awakening in the being through contagion rather than by a methodical, disciplined effort.

Perhaps, after all, something is being prepared and one day it will spring up to the surface.

That is what I hope for.

One day you will tell yourself, "Just think! I have been here so long, I could have learnt so much, realised so much and I never even thought of it! Only like that, now and then." And then, on that day... well, on that day, just imagine, you are going to wake up all of a sudden to something you never noticed but which is deep within you and *thirsts* for the truth, thirsts for transformation and is ready to make the effort required to realise it. On that day you will go very fast, you will advance with giant strides.... Perhaps, as I said, that day has come now after five years? I said, "I give you five years...." Now the five years have passed, so perhaps the day has come! Perhaps you will suddenly feel an *irresistible* need not to live in unconsciousness, in ignorance, in that state in which you do things without knowing why, feel things without understanding why, have contradictory wills, understand nothing about anything, live only by habit, routine, reactions — you take life easy. And one day you are no longer satisfied with that.

It depends, for each one it is different. Most often it is the need to know, to understand; for some it is the need to do what must be done as it should be done; for others it is a vague feeling that behind this life, so unconscious, so futile, so empty of meaning, there is something to find which is *worth* being lived — that there is a reality, a truth behind these falsehoods and illusions.

One suddenly feels that everything one does, everything one

sees, has no meaning, no purpose, but that *there is* something which has a meaning; that essentially one is here on earth for something, that all this — all these movements, all this agitation, all this wastage of force and energy — all that must have a purpose, an aim, and that this uneasiness one feels within oneself, this lack of satisfaction, this need, this *thirst* for something must lead us somewhere else.

And one day, you ask yourself, "But then, why is one born? Why does one die? Why does one suffer? Why does one act?"

You no longer live like a little machine, hardly half-conscious. You want to feel truly, to act truly, to know truly. Then, in ordinary life one searches for books, for people who know a little more than oneself, one begins to seek somebody who can solve these questions, lift the veil of ignorance. Here it is very simple. You only have to... do the things one does every day, but to do them with a purpose.

You go to the Samadhi, look at Sri Aurobindo's picture, you come to receive a flower from me, sit down to a lesson; you do everything you do but... with one question within you: Why?

And then, if you ask the question, you receive the answer.

Why?

Because we don't want life as it is any longer, because we don't want falsehood and ignorance any longer, because we don't want suffering and unconsciousness any longer, because we do not want disorder and bad will any longer, because Sri Aurobindo has come to tell us: It is not necessary to leave the earth to find the Truth, it is not necessary to leave life to find one's soul, it is not necessary to give up the world or to have limited beliefs in order to enter into relation with the Divine. The Divine is everywhere, in everything, and if He is hidden... it is because we do not take the trouble to discover Him.

We can, simply by a sincere aspiration, open a sealed door in us and find... that Something which will change the whole significance of life, reply to all our questions, solve all our problems and lead us to the perfection we aspire for without knowing it,

to that Reality which *alone* can satisfy us and give us lasting joy, equilibrium, strength, life.

All this you have heard many a time.

You have heard it — Oh! There are even some here who are so used to it that for them it seems to be the same thing as drinking a glass of water or opening a window to let in the sunlight.

But since I promised you that in five years you would be able *to live* these things, to have a concrete, real, convincing experience of them, well, that means you ought to be ready and that we are going to begin.

We have tried a little, but now we are going to try seriously!

The starting-point: to want it, truly want it, to need it. The next step: to think, *above all*, of that. A day comes, very quickly, when one is unable to think of anything else.

That is the one thing which counts. And then...

One formulates one's aspiration, lets the true prayer spring up from one's heart, the prayer which expresses the sincerity of the need. And then... well, one will see what happens.

Something will happen. Surely something will happen. For each one it will take a different form.

That's all. I am glad you gave me this.

15 August 1958

This short talk was given on a Friday, the day on which the Dhammapada was usually read.

As today is Sri Aurobindo's birthday I thought that instead of reading the Dhammapada I could read to you something which will both interest you and show you how Sri Aurobindo visualised our relation with the gods.

You know, don't you, that in India especially, there are countless categories of gods, who are all on different planes, some very close to man, others very close to the Supreme, with many intermediaries.

You will understand better what I want to tell you if I mention the gods of the Puranas — like those we saw the other day in the film — who in many ways are, I must say, inferior to man (!) although they have infinitely more power.

There are gods of the Overmind who are the great creators of the earth — until now. There are the gods of the Vedas who are mentioned in everything that has come down from the Rishis. And there are the gods of the Supermind, those who are going to manifest on earth, although of course they exist from all eternity on their own plane.

Here Sri Aurobindo is speaking mostly about the Vedic gods, but not exclusively nor in a very definite way. At any rate these gods are higher than the gods of the Puranas.

Here is what Sri Aurobindo tells us.

In fact, it is a prayer:

> Be wide in me, O Varuna;
> be mighty in me, O Indra;
> O Sun, be very bright and luminous;
> O Moon, be full of charm and sweetness.
> Be fierce and terrible, O Rudra;

be impetuous and swift, O Maruts;
be strong and bold, O Aryama;
be voluptuous and pleasurable, O Bhaga;
be tender and kind and loving and passionate, O Mitra.
Be bright and revealing, O Dawn;
O Night, be solemn and pregnant.
O Life, be full, ready and buoyant;
O Death, lead my steps from mansion to mansion.
Harmonise all these, O Brahmanaspati.
Let me not be subject to these gods, O Kali.[1]

So Sri Aurobindo makes Kali the great liberating power who ardently impels you towards progress and leaves no ties within you which would hinder you from progressing.

I think this will be a good subject for meditation.

(*Meditation*)

[1] *Thoughts and Aphorisms*, in SABCL, Vol. 17, p. 85.

27 August 1958

Sweet Mother, when you tell us to meditate on a subject, we choose, for instance, to meditate that we are opening to the light; we imagine all sorts of strange things, we imagine a door opening, etc., but this always takes a mental form.

It depends on the individual. Everyone has his own particular process. It depends altogether on each one. Some people may have an imagery which helps them; others, on the contrary, have a more abstract mind and only see ideas; others, who live more in sensations or feelings, have rather psychological movements, movements of inner feelings or sensations — it depends on each one. Those who have an active and particularly formative physical mind, see images, but everybody does not experience the same thing. If you ask the person next to you, for instance... (*To the next child*) When I give a subject, do you see images like that?

Sometimes.

Sometimes?

Most often I feel *something.*

What is it, most often?

A sensation.

A sensation, yes. It is more frequently a sensation — I mean generally — more frequently a sensation or a feeling than an image. The image always comes to those who have a formative

mental power, an active physical mind. It is an indication that one is active in one's mental consciousness.

(The child who had asked the first question) *But is this right?*

But everything is right if it has a result! Any means is good. Why shouldn't it be right?... Images like that are not necessarily ridiculous. They are not ridiculous, they are mental images. If they bring you some result, they are quite appropriate. If they give you an experience, they are appropriate.

For example, when I ask you to go deep down within yourselves, some of you will concentrate on a sensation, but others may just as well have the impression of going down into a deep well, and they clearly see the picture of steps going down into a dark and deep well, and they go down farther and farther, deeper and deeper, and sometimes reach precisely a door; they sit down before the door with the will to enter, and sometimes the door opens, and then they go in and see a kind of hall or a room or a cave or something, and from there, if they go on they may come to another door and again stop, and with an effort the door opens and they go farther. And if this is done with enough persistence and one can continue the experience, there comes a time when one finds oneself in front of a door which has... a special kind of solidity or solemnity, and with a great effort of concentration the door opens and one suddenly enters a hall of clarity, of light; and then, one has the experience, you see, of contact with one's soul.... But I don't see what is bad in having images!

No, but it is only an imagination, isn't it, Mother?

An imagination? But what is an imagination?... You cannot imagine anything which doesn't exist in the universe! It is impossible to imagine something that doesn't exist somewhere.

The only possibility is that one may not put one's image in its place: either one gives it virtues and qualities it doesn't have, or explains it with some other than the right explanation. But whatever one imagines exists somewhere; the main thing is to know where and to put it in its proper place.

Of course, if after having imagined that you are in front of a door which is opening, you thought that it was really a physical door inside your body, that would be a mistake! But if you realise that it is the mental form taken by your effort of concentration, this is quite correct. If you go wandering in the mental world, you will see plenty of forms like that, all kinds of forms, which have no material reality but truly exist in the mental world.

You cannot think powerfully of something without your thought taking a form. But if you were to believe that this form was physical, that would obviously be an error, yet it really does exist in the mental world.

Imagination is a power of formation. In fact, people who have no imagination are not formative from the mental point of view, they cannot give a concrete power to their thought. Imagination is a very powerful means of action. For instance, if you have a pain somewhere and if you imagine that you are making the pain disappear or are removing it or destroying it — all kinds of images like that — well, you succeed perfectly.

There's a story of a person who was losing her hair at a fantastic rate, enough to become bald within a few weeks, and then someone told her, "When you brush your hair, imagine that it is growing and will grow very fast." And always, while brushing her hair, she said, "Oh, my hair is growing! Oh, it will grow very fast!..." — And it happened! But what people usually do is to tell themselves, "Ah, all my hair is falling again and I shall become bald, that's certain, it's going to happen!"

And of course it happens!

27 August 1958

Mother, in the Friday Classes, you often read a sentence[1] *to us and ask us to meditate on it. But how should we meditate on a sentence? That is, should we think, meditate on the idea or... what should we do?*

Meditate on a sentence?

Yes.

Obviously on what it means.

That is, we must think...

Yes. Then?

Because that, Mother, becomes a mental function or what?

The sentence is already a mental formation; the mental formation is made. The sentence is the expression of the mental formation. So when you meditate on a sentence, there are two methods. There is an active, ordinary external method of reflecting and trying to understand what these words mean, understand intellectually what the sentence means exactly — that is active meditation. You concentrate on these few words and take the thought they express and try, through reasoning, deduction, analysis, to understand what it means.

There is another method, more direct and deep; it is to take this mental formation, this combination of words with the thought they represent, and to gather all your energy of attention on it, compelling yourself to concentrate all your strength on that formation. For instance, instead of concentrating all your energies on something you see physically, you take that thought

[1] At that time it was from the Dhammapada.

and concentrate all your energies on that thought — in the mind, of course.

And then, if you are able to concentrate the thought sufficiently and stop it from vacillating, you pass quite naturally from the thought expressed by the words to the *idea* which is behind and which could be expressed in other words, other forms. The characteristic of the idea is the power to clothe itself in many different thoughts. And when you have achieved this, you have already gone much deeper than by merely understanding the words. Naturally, if you continue to concentrate and know how to do it, you can pass from the idea to the luminous force that is behind. Then you enter a much vaster and deeper domain. But that asks for some training. But still, that is the very principle of meditation.

If you are able to go deep enough, you find the Principle and the Force behind the idea, and that gives you the power of realisation. This is how those who take meditation as a means of spiritual development are able to unite with the Principle which is behind things and obtain the power to act on these things from above.

But even without going so far — that implies a rather hard discipline, doesn't it, a long-standing habit — you can pass quite easily from the thought to the idea, and that gives you a light and an understanding in the mind which enables you, in your turn, to express the idea in any form. An idea can be expressed in many different forms, in many different thoughts, just as when you come down to a more material level, a thought can be expressed through many different words. Going downwards, towards expression, that is, spoken or written expression, there are many different words and different formulas which may serve to express a thought, but this thought is only *one* of the forms of thought which can express the idea, the idea behind, and this idea itself, if it is followed deeply, has behind it a principle of spiritual knowledge and power which can then spread and act on the manifestation.

When you have a thought you look for words, don't you, and then you try to arrange these words to express your thought; you can use many words to express a thought, you tell yourself, "No, look, if I put this word instead of that, it would express what I am thinking much better." That is what you learn when you are taught style, how to write.

But when I give you a written sentence which has the power to express a thought and tell you to concentrate on it, then, through this thought-form you can go back to the idea behind, which can be expressed in many different thoughts. It is like a great hierarchy: there is a Principle right at the top, which itself is not the only one, for you can go still higher up; but this Principle can be expressed in ideas, and these ideas can be expressed in a great number of thoughts and this great number of thoughts can make use of many languages and an even greater number of words.

When I give you a thought it is simply to help you to concentrate.... There are schools which put an object in front of you, a flower or a stone, or any object, and then you sit around it and concentrate on it and your eyes go like this (*Mother squints*) until you become the object. That too is a method of concentration. By gazing steadily like that, without moving, you finally pass into the thing you are gazing at. But you must not begin to gaze at all kinds of things: only gaze steadily at that. That gives you a look... it makes you squint.

All this is to learn concentration, that's all.

Sometimes one of these sentences expresses a very deep truth. It is one of those happy sentences which are very expressive. So that helps you to find the truth that is behind.

When we have finished the Dhammapada, that is what I intend to do. I am at present translating the latest of Sri Aurobindo's books we have published, *Thoughts and Aphorisms*, and I intend, every Friday, to give one single sentence, one single aphorism — with or without the commentary as necessary — as a subject for meditation. We still have to see how we should

go about it.... We could proceed in two different ways. As I am going to take them up in order, you will always know which one will be for the following week and prepare questions in advance; or else if you don't prepare the questions in advance, perhaps it will be more interesting to take a sentence, to have a meditation on it, and in the following lesson to ask me questions on the sentence from the previous week. Then, from the questions I am asked, I shall choose those that seem to me the most intelligent and answer them. And later we shall take a new sentence which will serve as the subject for meditation on that day and the subject for questions the following week. And this I am going to do with a very precise, very definite purpose: to bring you out of your mental somnolence and compel you to reflect and try to understand what I tell you.... For, it makes a little noise in your ears, a still softer noise in your heads, and then it goes out from the other side, and then it is finished! Sometimes, very rarely, by a special grace, there is just a little effect here, like this (*gesture*), which lasts like a little flickering flame — it burns, and then, pfft!... Something blows on it, it goes out and it is all finished.

We need lessons, Sweet Mother.

When you told me the other day that I had promised to give you "lessons", well, I took it very seriously. I am going to keep my promise. There.

3 September 1958

Sweet Mother, the other day you told me that it was necessary to learn how to discipline the imagination.

Yes.

How is it done?

Imagination is something very complex and manifold — what is vaguely called "imagination".

It can be the capacity for seeing and recording, noting the forms in some mental or other domain. There are artistic, literary, poetic domains, domains of action, scientific domains, all belonging to the mind — not a very high and abstract mind, a mind above the physical mind which, without our knowing it, pours out constantly through the individual and collective mind to manifest in action.

Some people, through a special faculty, are in contact with these domains, take up one formation or other that is there, draw them to themselves and give them an expression. This power of expression is different in different people, but those who can open themselves to these domains, to *see* things there, to draw these forms towards themselves and express them — either in literature or in painting or music or in action or science — are, according to the degree of their power of expression either very highly talented beings or else geniuses.

There are higher geniuses still. They are people who can open to a higher region, a higher force which, passing through the mental layers, comes and takes a form in a human mind and reveals itself in the world as new truths, new philosophical systems, new spiritual teachings, which are the works and at the same time the actions of the great beings who come to take birth

on earth. That is an imagination which can be called "Truth-imagination". These higher forces, when they come down into the earth-atmosphere, take living, active, powerful forms, spread throughout the world and prepare a new age.

These two kinds of imagination are what could be called higher imaginations.

And now, to come down to a more ordinary level, everyone has in him, in a greater or lesser measure, the power to give form to his mental activity and use this form either in his ordinary activity or to create and realise something. We are all the time, *always*, creating images, creating forms. We send them into the atmosphere without even knowing that we are doing so — they go roaming about, pass from one person to another, meet companions, sometimes join together and get on happily, sometimes create conflicts, and there are battles; for often, very often, in these mental imaginations there is a small element of will which tries to realise itself, and then everyone tries to send out his formation so that it can act, so that things can happen as he wants and, as everyone does this, it creates a general confusion. If our eyes were open to the vision of all these forms in the atmosphere, we would see very amazing things: battlefields, waves, onsets, retreats of a *crowd* of small mental entities which are constantly thrown out into the air and always try to realise themselves. All these formations have a common tendency to want to materialise and realise themselves physically, and as they are countless — they are far too many for there to be room enough on earth to manifest them — they jostle and elbow one another, they try to push back those which do not agree with them or even form armies marching in good order, always to take up the available room both in time and space — it is only a very small space compared with the countless number of creations.

So, individually, this is what happens. Some people do all that without knowing it — perhaps everybody — and they are constantly tossed from one thing to another, and hope, wish, desire, are disappointed, sometimes happy, sometimes in despair,

for they don't have any control or mastery over these things. But the beginning of wisdom is to look at ourselves thinking and to see this phenomenon, become aware of this constant projection into the atmosphere of small *living* entities which are trying to manifest. All this comes out of the mental atmosphere which we carry within ourselves. Once we see and observe, we can begin to sort them out, that is, to push back what is not in conformity with our highest will or aspiration and allow to move towards manifestation only the formations which can help us to progress and develop normally.

This is the control of active thought, and that was what I meant the other day.

How many times you sit and become aware that the thought is beginning to form images for itself, to tell itself a story; and so, when you have become a little expert at it, not only do you see unfolding before you the history of what you would like to happen in life, in your own life, but you can take something away, add a detail, perfect your work, make a really *fine* story in which everything conforms with your highest aspiration. And once you have made a complete harmonious construction, as perfect as you can make it, then you open your hands and let the bird fly away.

If it is well made, it always realises itself in the end. And that is what one doesn't know.

But the thing is realised in the course of time, sometimes long afterwards, when you have forgotten your story, can no longer remember having told it to yourself — you have changed much, are thinking about other things, making other stories, and the first one no longer interests you; and if you are not very attentive, when the result of the first story comes, you are already very far away from it and no longer remember at all that this is the result of your own story.... And that is why it is so important to control yourself, for if within you there are multiple and contradictory wills — not only wills but tendencies, orientations, levels of life — all this causes battles in your life. For example, at your highest

level you have fashioned a beautiful story which you send out into the world, but then, perhaps the next day, perhaps on the very same day, perhaps a little later, you have come down to a much more material level, and these things from above seem to you a little... fairylike, unreal; and you begin to make very concrete, very utilitarian formations which are not always very pretty... and these too go out.

I have known people with such opposite sides in their nature, so contradictory, that one day they could make a magnificent, luminous, powerful formation for realisation, and then the next day a defeatist, dark, black formation — a formation of despair — and so both would go out. And I was able to follow in the course of circumstances the beautiful one being realised, and while it was being realised, the dark one demolishing what the first one had done. And that is how it is in the larger lines of life as in its smaller details. And all that because one does not watch oneself thinking, because one believes one is the slave of these contradictory movements, because one says, "Oh! Today I am not feeling well. Oh! Today things seem sad to me", and one says this as if it were an ineluctable fate against which one could do nothing. But if one stands back or ascends a step, one can look at all these things, put them in their place, keep some, destroy or get rid of those one does not want and put all one's imaginative power — what is called imaginative — only in those one wants and which conform with one's highest aspiration. That is what I call controlling one's imagination.

It is very interesting. When one learns to do it and does it regularly one no longer has time to feel bored.

And instead of being a cork afloat on the waves of the sea and tossed here and there by each wave, defencelessly, one becomes a bird which opens its wings, flies above the waves and goes wherever it wants. That's all.

10 September 1958

"In modern times, as physical Science enlarged its discoveries and released the secret material forces of Nature into an action governed by human knowledge for human use, occultism receded and was finally set aside on the ground that the physical alone is real and Mind and Life are only departmental activities of Matter. On this basis, believing material Energy to be the key of all things, Science has attempted to move towards a control of mind and life processes by a knowledge of the material instrumentation and process of our normal and abnormal mind and life functionings and activities; the spiritual is ignored as only one form of mentality. It may be observed in passing that if this endeavour succeeded, it might not be without danger for the existence of the human race, even as now are certain other scientific discoveries misused or clumsily used by a humanity mentally and morally unready for the handling of powers so great and perilous; for it would be an artificial control applied without any knowledge of the secret forces which underlie and sustain our existence. Occultism in the West could be thus easily pushed aside because it never reached its majority, never acquired ripeness and a philosophic or sound systematic foundation. It indulged too freely in the romance of the supernatural or made the mistake of concentrating its major effort on the discovery of formulas and effective modes for using supernormal powers. It deviated into magic white and black or into a romantic or thaumaturgic paraphernalia of occult mysticism and the exaggeration of what was after all a limited and scanty knowledge. These tendencies and this insecurity of mental foundation made it difficult to defend

and easy to discredit, a target facile and vulnerable. In Egypt and the East this line of knowledge arrived at a greater and more comprehensive endeavour: this ampler maturity can be seen still intact in the remarkable system of the Tantras; it was not only a many-sided science of the supernormal but supplied the basis of all the occult elements of religion and even developed a great and powerful system of spiritual discipline and self-realisation. For the highest occultism is that which discovers the secret movements and dynamic supernormal possibilities of Mind and Life and Spirit and uses them in their native force or by an applied process for the greater effectivity of our mental, vital and spiritual being.

"Occultism is associated in popular idea with magic and magical formulas and a supposed mechanism of the supernatural. But this is only one side, nor is it altogether a superstition as is vainly imagined by those who have not looked deeply or at all at this covert side of secret Nature-Force or experimented with its possibilities. Formulas and their application, a mechanisation of latent forces, can be astonishingly effective in the occult use of mind-power and life-power just as it is in physical Science, but this is only a subordinate method and a limited direction. For mind and life forces are plastic, subtle and variable in their action and have not the material rigidity; they need a subtle and plastic intuition in the knowledge of them, in the interpretation of their action and process and in their application, — even in the interpretation and action of their established formulas. An overstress on mechanisation and rigid formulation is likely to result in sterilisation or a formalised limitation of knowledge and, on the pragmatic side, to much error, ignorant convention, misuse and failure. Now that we are outgrowing the superstition of the sole truth of Matter, a swing backward towards the old occultism and to new

formulations, as well as to a scientific investigation of the still hidden secrets and powers of Mind and a close study of psychic and abnormal or supernormal psychological phenomena, is possible and, in parts, already visible. But if it is to fulfil itself, the true foundation, the true aim and direction, the necessary restrictions and precautions of this line of inquiry have to be rediscovered; its most important aim must be the discovery of the hidden truths and powers of the mind-force and the life-power and the greater forces of the concealed spirit. Occult science is, essentially, the science of the subliminal, the subliminal in ourselves and the subliminal in world-nature, and of all that is in connection with the subliminal, including the subconscient and the superconscient, and the use of it as part of self-knowledge and world-knowledge and for the right dynamisation of that knowledge."

The Life Divine, SABCL, Vol. 19, pp. 875–77

Sweet Mother, what is white magic?

What we call "white magic" is a beneficial magic and "black magic" is a harmful magic. But in fact these are mere words, they have no meaning.

Magic?... It is a knowledge that has been reduced to purely material formulas. They are some kind of words or numbers or combinations of words and numbers, which, if they are simply pronounced or written, even by someone who has no inner power, must act. In occultism, this is what corresponds to chemical formulas in science. You see, in science you have chemical formulas for combining certain elements and producing others from them; even if you do not have any mental or vital or even physical power, if you just follow to the letter the formula you have, you obtain the required result — it is enough simply to have a memory. Well, the same thing has been tried in occultism, making combinations of sounds, letters, numbers, words, which,

by their inherent qualities, have the power to obtain a certain result. In this way, any fool, if he learns this and does exactly what he is told, obtains — or believes he will obtain — the result he wants. While... let us take the mantra, for instance, which is a form of occultism; unless the mantra is given by a guru and the guru transmits his occult or spiritual power to you with the mantra, you may repeat your mantra thousands of times, it will have no effect.

That is to say, in true occultism, one must have the quality, the ability, the inner gift in order to use it, and that is the safeguard. True occultism cannot be practised by any fool. And this is no longer magic — neither white magic nor black nor golden — it is not magic at all, it is a spiritual power which must be acquired by long discipline; and finally, it is given to you only by a divine grace.

This means that as soon as one draws near the Truth, one is safe from all charlatanism, all pretension and falsehood. Of this I have had numerous and extremely conclusive proofs. And so someone who has the true occult power possesses at the same time, by the strength of this inner truth, the power to undo any magic, white or black or whatever colour it may be, simply by applying a drop of that truth, one might say. There is nothing that can resist that power. And this is very well known to those who practise magic, for they always take very great care, in all countries but especially in India, never to try out any of their formulas against yogis and saints, because they know that these formulas which they send out with their little mechanical, very superficial power, will go and strike, like a ball on a wall, the true power that protects one who leads a spiritual life, and quite naturally their formula will rebound and fall back on them.

The yogi or saint doesn't need to do anything, he doesn't even have to want to protect himself: it is something automatic.

He is in a state of consciousness and inner power which automatically protects him from everything that is inferior. Naturally, he can also use his power deliberately to protect others.

This rebounding of the bad formation from his atmosphere automatically protects him, but if this bad formation is made against someone he is protecting or simply someone who asks for his help, then he can, by a movement of his own atmosphere, his own aura, surround the person who is exposed to the evil magic spells, and the rebounding process acts in the same way and causes the bad formation to fall back quite naturally on the one who made it. But in this case the conscious will of the yogi or saint or sage is needed. He has to be informed about what has happened and he must decide to intervene.

That is the difference between true knowledge and magic.

Anything else?... Is that all?

Mother, can physical science by its progress open to occultism?

It does not call it "occultism", that's all. It is only a question of words.... They are making sensational discoveries which people with occult knowledge already knew thousands of years ago! They have made a long circuit and come to the same thing.

With the most recent discoveries in medicine, in the applied sciences, for instance, they are contacting in this way, with a wonder-struck interest, things which were known to certain sages a very, very long time ago. And then they present all this before you as new marvels — but indeed they are rather old, their marvels!

They will end up by practising occultism without knowing that they are doing so! For, in fact, as soon as one draws close, however slightly, to the truth of things and when one is sincere in one's search, not satisfied by mere appearances, when one really wants to find something and goes deep, penetrates behind appearances, then one begins to advance towards the truth of things; and as one comes closer to it, well, one finds again the same knowledge that others who began by going within have brought back from their inner discoveries.

Only the method and the path are different but the thing discovered will be the same, because there are not two things to be found, there is only one. It will necessarily be the same. It all depends on the path one follows; some go fast, others slowly, some go straight, others, as I said, go a long way round — and what labour! How they have laboured!... Besides, it is very respectable.

(*Silence*)

Now they are finding out that they can replace anaesthetics by hypnotism with infinitely better results. Well, hypnotism is a form — a form modernised in its expression — of occultism; a very limited, very small form of a very tiny power compared with occult power, but still it is a form of occultism which has been put in modern terms to make the thing modern. And I don't know if you have heard about these things, but they are very interesting from a certain point of view: for instance, this process of hypnotism has been tried on someone who had to have a skin-graft on a wound. I don't remember all the details now, but the arm had to remain attached to the leg for a fortnight.... If the person were immobilised by plaster and bandages and all sorts of things, at the end of the fortnight he wouldn't be able to move — everything would become stiff and he would need weeks of treatment to recover the free use of his arm. In this case, nothing was tied up, nothing was physically immobilised — no plaster, no bandages, nothing — the person was just hypnotised and told to keep his arm in that position. He kept it for a fortnight, without any effort, any difficulty, without any intervention from his will: it was the will of the hypnotiser which intervened. It was perfectly successful, the arm remained in the required position, and when the fortnight was over and the hypnotism removed, and the person was told, "Now you may move", he began to move! Well, that's a step forward.

They are soon going to meet — it will be nothing more than

a question of words — then, if they are not too rigid, they can agree on the value given to the words!

Sweet Mother, they say hypnotism has a bad after-effect on the hypnotised person?

No, no! If somebody practises hypnotism to impose his will on another, it can obviously do much harm to the other person, but we are speaking of a hypnotism which is practised in a humanitarian way, it might be said, and for precise reasons.

All the bad effects can be avoided if the one who does it has no bad intentions.

If you use chemical formulas in an ignorant way, you can cause an explosion (*laughter*), and that is very dangerous! Well, if you use occult formulas ignorantly — or egoistically, which is even worse than ignorantly — you can also have harmful results. But that doesn't mean that occultism is bad or hypnotism is bad or chemistry is bad. You are not going to ban chemistry because there are people who cause explosions! (*Laughter*)

To learn occultism one must have special qualities, whereas for learning science...

But for everything one must have special qualities!

Scientific knowledge is accessible to all.

Listen, if you are not an artist, you may work for years with paint-brushes, colours, canvases, and spend much money and much effort, and yet produce horrible things. If you are not a musician, you may labour hard for hours at playing the piano and you will never do anything worthwhile. Special qualities are always needed.... Why, even for an athlete — if you are not born an athlete, you may try as hard as you like, you will only succeed in doing something quite mediocre and ordinary. It will

be better than someone who does not try at all, but that does not mean that you are automatically going to succeed. Besides, if we go a step further, everyone has countless possibilities within him of which he is unaware and which develop only if he does what is to be done in the way it should be done.... But there are two types of progress, not only one; there is the progress that consists in perfecting more and more the capacities, possibilities, faculties and qualities you have — this is what is normally obtained by education; but if you go in for a little more thorough development by approaching a deeper truth, you can add, to the qualities you already have, other new ones which seem to be asleep in your being.

You can multiply your possibilities, enlarge and increase them; you can suddenly bring up something you did not think you had. I have already explained this to you several times. When one discovers one's psychic being within, at the same time there develop and manifest, quite unexpectedly, things one could not do at all before and which one didn't think were in one's nature. Of this too I have had numerous examples. I have given you this one, but I am repeating it to you once more to make myself understood.

I used to know a young girl who was born in a very ordinary environment, who had not received much education and wrote rather clumsy French, who had not developed her imagination and had absolutely no literary sense: that seemed to be among the possibilities she did not have. Well, when she had the inner experience of contact with her psychic being, and as long as the contact was living and very present, she wrote admirable things. When she fell back from that state into an ordinary one, she could not even put two sentences together correctly! And I saw examples of both kinds of her writing.

There is a genius within everyone of us — we don't know it. We must find the way to make it come out — but it is there sleeping, it asks for nothing better than to manifest; we must open the door to it.

17 September 1958

"An intellectual approach to the highest knowledge, the mind's possession of it, is an indispensable aid to this movement of Nature in the human being. Ordinarily, on our surface, man's chief instrument of thought and action is the reason, the observing, understanding and arranging intellect. In any total advance or evolution of the Spirit, not only the intuition, insight, inner sense, the heart's devotion, a deep and direct life-experience of the things of the Spirit have to be developed, but the intellect also must be enlightened and satisfied; our thinking and reflecting mind must be helped to understand, to form a reasoned and systematised idea of the goal, the method, the principles of this highest development and activity of our nature and the truth of all that lies behind it. Spiritual realisation and experience, an intuitive and direct knowledge, a growth of inner consciousness, a growth of the soul and of an intimate soul-perception, soul-vision and a soul-sense, are indeed the proper means of this evolution: but the support of the reflective and critical reason is also of great importance; if many can dispense with it, because they have a vivid and direct contact with inner realities and are satisfied with experience and insight, yet in the whole movement it is indispensable. If the supreme truth is a spiritual Reality, then the intellect of man needs to know what is the nature of that original Truth and the principle of its relations to the rest of existence, to ourselves and the universe. The intellect is not capable by itself of bringing us into touch with the concrete spiritual reality, but it can help by a mental formulation of the truth of the Spirit which explains it to the mind and can be applied even in the more direct

seeking: this help is of a capital importance."
The Life Divine, SABCL, Vol. 19, pp. 877–78

Sweet Mother, here Sri Aurobindo writes: "An intellectual approach to the highest knowledge, the mind's possession of it..." How is this possible?

Everything that happens to us in the spiritual world we always have a tendency to translate mentally; we want to explain it to ourselves, draw conclusions from it, change the experience into a rule of action, profit mentally by what has happened in order to transform the experience into something practically useful. That is what Sri Aurobindo calls "the mind's possession of it". This is done automatically, so to say. Unfortunately, the best part of the experience always escapes; and besides, if one wants to keep it intact, one would have to remain in a state in which the experience is not mentalised, and if one lives in the outer world this is practically impossible. That is why those who wished to enjoy their spiritual experience without intervention from the mind used to remain in states of trance and to carefully avoid coming down to the level of action. But if one wants to transform life, if one wants the spiritual experience to have an effect on the mind, the vital and the body, on the daily activities, it is indispensable to try to express it mentally and accept the inevitable diminution, until the mind itself is transformed and capable of participating in the experience without deforming it.

What we want to do is still more difficult, for we want the vital also to be transformed and capable of participating in the experience without deforming it, and finally the physical itself, the body, to be transformed by the spiritual action and no longer be an obstacle to the experience.

This transformation is precisely the point that ordinary thought finds most difficult to accept, for it is almost the faculty of thought itself which must be changed. Its whole functioning has to be changed for this transformation to be possible, and we

are so used to identifying the faculty with its functioning that we wonder if it is possible to think otherwise than in the way we ordinarily do.

It is possible only when one has had the experience of complete silence in the mental region and when the spiritual force with its light and power descends through the mind and makes it act directly without its following its usual method of analysis, deduction, reasoning. All these faculties which are usually considered the normal activities of the mind, must be stopped, and yet the spiritual Light, Knowledge and Power must be able to transform them into a channel of direct expression, without using these means to express themselves.

The mind, in its outermost form, is a means of action, an instrument for organisation and execution. It puts concepts in order, relates them to one another, draws conclusions for action from them and gives impulse to this action. This power of organisation and impulse to action can be produced directly by the spiritual force which takes hold of the mental consciousness without these processes of analysis, deduction, reasoning being necessary. In intuition things already happen somewhat in this way; but spiritual intervention is, as it were, a super-intuition, a direct expression of the vision, of the experience, of knowledge by identity.

(*Silence*)

There are many stages in this transformation and the first are like a kind of mental imitation of the movement. The whole process of analysis, reasoning, deduction and formulation of conclusions occurs almost spontaneously in a mental background and gives us the result which seems to us an intuition but which is still the result of all that work which was carried out very swiftly and, as I said, in a sort of background of which we are not fully conscious, so that we see the starting-point and the result without following the whole process in detail, the whole development

of the mental activity. People who have a very quick mind and can grasp things very fast, people whose mental activity is extremely swift, immediate, can give the impression that they have intuition but this is only an outer form and almost an imitation of true intuition. Intuition is already a direct vision, something that dispenses with reasoning and deduction. Through intuition there is already an expression of direct knowledge.

But before reaching this stage, all the experiences one has must pass through the ordinary mental method of observation, analysis and deduction in order to reach the outer consciousness. The very essence of the experience fades away and there remains only a sort of very dry husk which has lost all its power of realisation — almost, almost lost it.

But those whose intellectual activity is very dominant find it almost absolutely necessary to catch hold of everything, all inner experiences, and to begin to formulate them. If, in addition, they have a power of expression, they try to formulate them in words and sentences; and when one has lived these experiences and becomes aware of the descending curve, one sees at each stage the deep reality of the experience withdrawing, fading into the background, instead of being in the forefront and commanding the whole being; it retreats slowly like this (*gesture*), and outside there remains only something... which is a kind of dry and cold imitation. It may be expressed in very enthusiastic words, but in comparison with what the thing itself was, in itself, in its deep truth, it is so shrivelled up, diminished.... All the true joy, the true beauty, the inner enthusiasm, that wonderful warmth of the experience — all this retreats far behind. You try to keep a hold on it, but it eludes you. And you pay dearly for this power of formulation.

Mother, in our life here, what do we mean by the "development of the mind"? And how is it useful?

I believe I have already explained this to you once. I think I have

even explained it in detail in the articles on education. It is quite similar to the results of physical education for the body.

We have limbs and muscles and nerves, indeed everything that constitutes the body; if we don't give them a special development, a special education, all these things do what they can to express the Power in the body, but it is a very clumsy and very incomplete expression. It is beyond question that a physical body which has been trained according to the most complete and rational methods of physical culture is capable of things it could never do otherwise. I think no one can deny that. Well, for the mind it is the same thing. You have a mental instrument with many possibilities, faculties, but they are latent and need a special education, a special training so that they can express the Light. It is certain that in ordinary life the brain is the seat of the outer expression of the mental consciousness; well, if this brain is not developed, if it is crude, there are innumerable things which cannot be expressed, because they do not have the instrument required to express themselves. It would be like a musical instrument with most of its notes missing, and that produces a rough approximation but not something precise.

Mental culture, intellectual education changes the constitution of your brain, enlarges it considerably, and as a result the expression becomes more complete and more precise.

It is not necessary if you want to escape from life and go into inexpressible heights, but it is indispensable if you want to express your experience in outer life.

Mother, you said that if one develops these faculties of analysis, deduction and all that too much, they become obstacles to spiritual experiences, no?

If they are not controlled, mastered, yes. But not necessarily. Not necessarily. It might make the control a little more difficult, for naturally it is more difficult to master an individualised being than a crude one — with a completer individualisation the

ego becomes more crystallised and also self-satisfied, doesn't it?... But granting that this difficulty has been overcome, well, in a highly developed individuality the result is infinitely superior to the one obtained in a crude and uneducated nature. I am not saying that the process of transformation or rather of consecration is not more difficult but once it is achieved the result is far superior.

This may very well be compared with musical instruments, one of which has a certain number of notes and the other ten times as many. Well, it is perhaps easier to play an instrument of four or five notes but the music that could be played on a complete keyboard is obviously far superior!

One could even compare this to an orchestra much more than to a simple instrument. A human being, a fully developed human individuality is very much like one of those stupendous orchestras which has hundreds and hundreds of players. It is obviously very difficult to control and conduct them but the result can be marvellous.

24 September 1958

"Our thinking mind is concerned mainly with the statement of general spiritual truth, the logic of its absolute and the logic of its relativities, how they stand to each other or lead to each other, and what are the mental consequences of the spiritual theorem of existence....

"The means by which this need [of intellectual understanding] can be satisfied and with which our nature of mind has provided us is philosophy, and in this field it must be a spiritual philosophy. Such systems have arisen in numbers in the East; for almost always, wherever there has been a considerable spiritual development, there has arisen from it a philosophy justifying it to the intellect. The method was at first an intuitive seeing and an intuitive expression, as in the fathomless thought and profound language of the Upanishads, but afterwards there was developed a critical method, a firm system of dialectics, a logical organisation. The later philosophies were an intellectual account[1] *or a logical justification of what had been found by inner realisation; or they provided themselves with a mental ground or a systematised method for realisation and experience.*[2] *In the West where the syncretic tendency of the consciousness was replaced by the analytic and separative, the spiritual urge and the intellectual reason parted company almost at the outset; philosophy took from the first a turn towards a purely intellectual and ratiocinative explanation of things. Nevertheless, there were systems like the Pythagorean, Stoic, and Epicurean, which were*

[1] *E.g.*, the Gita.
[2] *E.g.*, the Yoga philosophy of Patanjali.

dynamic not only for thought but for conduct of life and developed a discipline, an effort at inner perfection of the being; this reached a higher spiritual plane of knowledge in later Christian or Neo-pagan thought-structures where East and West met together. But later on the intellectualisation became complete and the connection of philosophy with life and its energies or spirit and its dynamism was either cut or confined to the little that the metaphysical idea can impress on life and action by an abstract and secondary influence. Religion has supported itself in the West not by philosophy but by a credal theology; sometimes a spiritual philosophy emerges by sheer force of individual genius, but it has not been as in the East a necessary adjunct to every considerable line of spiritual experience and endeavour. It is true that a philosophic development of spiritual thought is not entirely indispensable; for the truths of spirit can be reached more directly and completely by intuition and by a concrete inner contact. It must also be said that the critical control of the intellect over spiritual experience can be hampering and unreliable, for it is an inferior light turned upon a field of higher illumination; the true controlling power is an inner discrimination, a psychic sense and tact, a superior intervention of guidance from above or an innate and luminous inner guidance. But still this line of development too is necessary, because there must be a bridge between the spirit and the intellectual reason: the light of a spiritual or at least a spiritualised intelligence is necessary for the fullness of our total inner evolution, and without it, if another deeper guidance is lacking, the inner movement may be erratic and undisciplined, turbid and mixed with unspiritual elements or one-sided or incomplete in its catholicity. For the transformation of the Ignorance into the integral Knowledge the growth in us of a spiritual intelligence ready to receive a higher

light and canalise it for all the parts of our nature is an intermediate necessity of great importance."

The Life Divine, SABCL, Vol. 19, pp. 878–80

There's enough matter here to ask me at least a dozen questions! (*To a child*) So, the first of the twelve?

(*Silence*)

I have a question here, but it is a verbal question, which means that it is not very interesting. It is a phrase from the beginning of the passage: What is the meaning of "the mental consequences of the spiritual theorem of existence"?

It is probably from someone who doesn't know what "theorem" means!

A theorem is the statement of a truth which has been arrived at through reasoning. The word is used quite concretely in mathematics and all the external sciences. From the philosophical point of view it is the same thing. In the present instance, the spiritual theorem of existence may be stated in this way: the Absolute in the relativities or Oneness in multiplicity. But to explain "the mental consequences", we must go into philosophy and I believe you are rather unprepared for that. And to really understand what it means, one feels that philosophy is always skirting the truth, like a tangent that draws closer and closer but never touches — that there is something that escapes. And this something is in truth everything.

To understand these things... there is only experience — *to live* this truth, not to feel it in the way the ordinary senses do but to realise within oneself the truth, the concrete existence of both states, simultaneously, existing together even while they are opposite conditions. All words can lead only to confusion; only experience gives the tangible reality of the *thing*: the simultaneous existence of the Absolute and the relativities, of Oneness and multiplicity, not as two states following each other and one

resulting from the other, but as a state which can be perceived in two opposite ways depending on... the position one takes in relation to the Reality.

Words in themselves falsify the experience. To speak in words one must take not a step backwards but a step downwards, and the essential truth escapes. One must use them simply as a more or less accessible path to reach the *thing* itself which cannot be formulated. And from this point of view no formulation is better than any other; the best of all is the one that helps each one to remember, that is, the way in which the intervention of the Grace has crystallised in the thought.

Probably no two ways are identical, everyone must find his own. But one must not be mistaken, it is not "finding" by reasoning, it is "finding" by aspiration; it is not by study and analysis, but by the intensity of the aspiration and the sincerity of the inner opening.

When one is truly and exclusively turned to the spiritual Truth, whatever name may be given to it, when all the rest becomes secondary, when that alone is imperative and inevitable, then, *one single moment* of intense, absolute, total concentration is enough to receive the answer.

The experience comes first, in this case, and it is only later, as a consequence and a memory that the formulation becomes clear. In this way one is sure not to make a mistake. The formulation may be more or less exact, that is of no importance, so long as one doesn't make a dogma out of it.

It is good for you, that is all that is needed. If you want to impose it on others, whatever it may be, even if it is perfect in itself, it becomes false.

That is why religions are always mistaken — always — because they want to standardise the expression of an experience and impose it on everyone as an irrefutable truth. The experience was true, complete in itself, convincing — for the one who had it. The formulation he made of it was excellent — for himself. But to want to impose it on others is a fundamental error which

has altogether disastrous consequences, always, which always leads far, very far from the Truth.

That is why all the religions, however beautiful they may be, have always led man to the worst excesses. All the crimes, the horrors perpetrated in the name of religion are among the darkest stains on human history, and simply because of this little initial error: wanting what is true for one individual to be true for the mass or collectivity.

(*Silence*)

The path must be shown and the doors opened but everyone must *follow* the path, pass through the doors and go towards his personal realisation.

The only help one can and should receive is that of the Grace which formulates itself in everyone according to his own need.

1 October 1958

Sweet Mother, what is an ideal of moral perfection?

There are thousands of moral perfections. Everyone has his own ideal of moral perfection.

What is usually called moral perfection is to have all the qualities that are considered moral: to have no defects, never to make a mistake, never to err, to be always what one conceives to be the best, to have all the virtues — that is, to realise the highest mental conception: to take all the qualities — there are many, aren't there? — all the virtues, all that man has conceived to be the most beautiful, most noble, most true, and to live that integrally, to let all one's actions be guided by that, all the movements, all the reactions, all the feelings, all... That is living a moral ideal of perfection. It is the summit of man's mental evolution.

Not many people do it... but still... there have been some and there still are. This is what men usually take for the spiritual life. When they meet a man of this type, they say, "Oh! He is a great spiritual being." He may be a great saint, he may be a great sage but he is *not* a spiritual being.

And yet it is already very good and very difficult to realise this. And there comes a time in the inner evolution when it is very necessary to try to realise it. It is obviously infinitely higher than to be still guided by all one's impulses and ignorant outer reactions. It is to be already in a way the master of one's nature. It is even a stage through which one has to pass, for it is the stage when one begins to be the master of one's ego, when one is ready to let it fall away — it is still there but sufficiently weakened to be nearing its end. This is the last stage before crossing over to the other side, and certainly, if anyone imagines that he can go over to the other side without passing through this stage, he

would risk making a great mistake, and of taking for perfect freedom a perfect weakness with regard to his lower nature.

It is almost impossible to pass from the mental being — even the most perfect and most remarkable — to the true spiritual life without having realised this ideal of moral perfection for a certain period of time, however brief it may be. Many people try to take a short-cut and want to assert their inner freedom before having overcome all the weaknesses of the outer nature; they are in great danger of deluding themselves. The true spiritual life, complete freedom, is something much higher than the highest moral realisations, but one must take care that this socalled freedom is not an indulgence and a contempt for all rules.

One must go higher, always higher, higher; nothing less than what the highest of humanity has achieved.

One must be capable of being spontaneously all that humanity has conceived to be the highest, the most beautiful, the most perfect, the most disinterested, the most comprehensive, the best, before opening one's spiritual wings and looking at all that from above as something which still belongs to the individual self, in order to enter into true spirituality, that which has no limits, which lives in an integral way Infinity and Eternity.

8 October 1958

Sweet Mother, will there not be any intermediary states between man and superman?

There will probably be many.

Man and superman? You are not speaking of the new supramental race, are you? Are you really speaking of what *we* call the superman, that is, man born in the human way and trying to transform the physical being he has received by his ordinary human birth? Are there any stages? — There will certainly be countless *partial* realisations. According to each one's capacity, the degree of transformation will differ, and it is certain that there will be a considerable number of attempts, more or less fruitful or unfruitful, before we come to something like the superman, and even those will be more or less successful attempts.

All those who strive to overcome their ordinary nature, all those who try to realise materially the deeper experience which has brought them into contact with the divine Truth, all those who, instead of turning to the Beyond or the Highest, try to realise physically, externally, the change of consciousness they have realised within themselves — all are apprentice-supermen. And there, there are countless differences in the success of their efforts. Each time we try not to be an ordinary man, not to live the ordinary life, to express in our movements, our actions and reactions the divine Truth, when we are governed by that Truth instead of being governed by the general ignorance, we are apprentice-supermen, and according to the success of our efforts, well, we are more or less able apprentices, more or less advanced on the way.

All these are stages, so... In reality, in this race to the Transformation, the question is to know which of the two will arrive

first: the one who wants to transform his body in the image of the divine Truth, or the old habit of the body to go on disintegrating until it is so deformed that it can no longer continue to live in its outer integrality. It is a race between transformation and decay. For there are only two stopping-places, two things which can indicate to what extent one has succeeded: either success, that is to say, becoming a superman — then of course one can say, "Now I have reached the goal"... or else death. Till then, normally, one is "on the way".

It is one of these two things — either attaining the goal or a sudden rupture of life — which temporarily puts an end to the advance. And on the road each one has gone more or less far, but until one reaches the end one cannot say what stage one is at. It is the final step that will count. So only the one who comes a few hundred or thousand years later and looks back, will be able to say, "There was this stage and that stage, this realisation and that realisation...." That is history, it will be a historical perception of the event. Till then all of us are in the movement and the work.

How far have we gone and how far shall we go? It is better not to think too much about that, for it cripples you and you can't run well. It is better to think only about running and nothing else. That is the only way to run well. You look at where you want to go and put all your effort in the movement to go forward. How far you have gone is not your concern. I say, "This is history", it will come later. The historians of our effort will tell us — because perhaps we shall still be there — will tell us what we did, how we did it. For the moment what is necessary is to do it; this is the only thing that matters.

22 October 1958

"But this is not the standpoint from which the true significance of the spiritual evolution in man or the value of spirituality can be judged or assessed; for its real work is not to solve human problems on the past or present mental basis, but to create a new foundation of our being and our life and knowledge. The ascetic or other-worldly tendency of the mystic is an extreme affirmation of his refusal to accept the limitations imposed by material Nature: for his very reason of being is to go beyond her; if he cannot transform her, he must leave her. At the same time the spiritual man has not stood back altogether from the life of humanity; for the sense of unity with all beings, the stress of a universal love and compassion, the will to spend the energies for the good of all creatures, are central to the dynamic outflowering of the spirit: he has turned therefore to help, he has guided as did the ancient Rishis or the prophets, or stooped to create and, where he has done so with something of the direct power of the Spirit, the results have been prodigious. But the solution of the problem which spirituality offers is not a solution by external means, though these also have to be used, but by an inner change, a transformation of the consciousness and nature.

"If no decisive but only a contributory result, an accretion of some new finer elements to the sum of the consciousness, has been the general consequence and there has been no life-transformation, it is because man in the mass has always deflected the spiritual impulsion, recanted from the spiritual ideal or held it only as a form and rejected the inward change. Spirituality cannot be called upon to deal with life by a non-spiritual method

or attempt to cure its ills by the panaceas, the political, social or other mechanical remedies which the mind is constantly attempting and which have always failed and will continue to fail to solve anything. The most drastic changes made by these means change nothing; for the old ills exist in a new form: the aspect of the outward environment is altered, but man remains what he was; he is still an ignorant mental being misusing or not effectively using his knowledge, moved by ego and governed by vital desires and passions and the needs of the body, unspiritual and superficial in his outlook, ignorant of his own self and the forces that drive and use him.... Only a spiritual change, an evolution of his being from the superficial mental towards the deeper spiritual consciousness, can make a real and effective difference. To discover the spiritual being in himself is the main business of the spiritual man and to help others towards the same evolution is his real service to the race; till that is done, an outward help can succour and alleviate, but nothing or very little more is possible."

The Life Divine, SABCL, Vol. 19, pp. 883–85

Sweet Mother, how can someone who hasn't much spiritual capacity best help in this work?

I don't know whether one can say that anyone has much or little spiritual capacity. It is not like that.

To live the spiritual life, a reversal of consciousness is needed. This cannot be compared in any way with the different faculties or possibilities one has in the mental field. It may be said of someone that he hasn't much mental, vital or physical capacity, that his possibilities are very limited; in that case it may be asked how these capacities may be developed, that is, how new ones may be acquired, which is something rather difficult. But to live the spiritual life is to open to another world

within oneself. It is to reverse one's consciousness, as it were. The ordinary human consciousness, even in the most developed, even in men of great talent and great realisation, is a movement turned outwards — all the energies are directed outwards, the whole consciousness is spread outwards; and if anything is turned inwards, it is very little, very rare, very fragmentary, it happens only under the pressure of very special circumstances, violent shocks, the shocks life gives precisely with the intention of slightly reversing this movement of exteriorisation of the consciousness.

But all who have lived a spiritual life have had the same experience: all of a sudden something in their being has been reversed, so to speak, has been turned suddenly and sometimes completely inwards, and also at the same time upwards, from within upwards — but it is not an external "above", it is within, deep, something other than the heights as they are physically conceived. Something has literally been turned over. There has been a decisive experience and the standpoint in life, the way of looking at life, the attitude one takes in relation to it, has suddenly changed, and in some cases quite definitively, irrevocably.

And as soon as one is turned towards the spiritual life and reality, one touches the Infinite, the Eternal, and there can no longer be any question of a greater or smaller number of capacities or possibilities. It is the *mental* conception of spiritual life which may say that one has more or less capacity to live spiritually, but this is not at all an adequate statement. What may be said is that one is more or less ready for the decisive and total reversal. In reality, it is the mental capacity to withdraw from ordinary activities and to set out in search of the spiritual life which can be measured.

But so long as one is in the mental field, in this state, as it were, on this plane of consciousness, one can't do much for others, either for life in general or for particular individuals, because one doesn't have the certitude oneself, one doesn't have the definitive experience, the consciousness has not been

established in the spiritual world; and all that can be said is that they are mental activities which have their good and bad sides, but not much power and, in any case, not this power of spiritual contagion which is the only truly effective power.

The only thing that is truly effective is the possibility of transferring to others the state of consciousness in which one lives oneself. But this power cannot be invented. One cannot imitate it, cannot seem to have it; it only comes spontaneously when one is established in that state oneself, when one *lives* within it and not when one is trying to live within it — when one *is* there. And that is why all those who truly have a spiritual life cannot be deceived.

An imitation of spiritual life may delude people who still live in the mind, but those who have realised this reversal of consciousness in themselves, whose relation with the outer being is completely different, cannot be deceived and cannot make a mistake.

It is these people the mental being does not understand. So long as one is in the mental consciousness, even the highest, and sees the spiritual life from outside, one judges with one's mental faculties, with the habit of seeking, erring, correcting, progressing, and seeking once again; and one thinks that those who are in the spiritual life suffer from the same incapacity, but that is a very gross mistake!

When the reversal of the being has taken place, all that is finished. One no longer seeks, one sees. One no longer deduces, one knows. One no longer gropes, one walks straight to the goal. And when one has gone farther — only a little farther — one knows, feels, lives the supreme truth that the Supreme Truth *alone* acts, the Supreme Lord *alone* wills, knows and does through human beings. How could there be any possibility of error there? What He does, He does because He wills to do it.

For our mistaken vision these are perhaps incomprehensible actions, but they have a meaning and an aim and lead where they ought to lead.

(*Silence*)

If one sincerely wants to help others and the world, the best thing one can do is to be oneself what one wants others to be — not only as an example, but because one becomes a centre of radiating power which, by the very fact that it exists, compels the rest of the world to transform itself.

29 October 1958

"It is true that the spiritual tendency has been to look more beyond life than towards life. It is true also that the spiritual change has been individual and not collective; its result has been successful in the man, but unsuccessful or only indirectly operative in the human mass. The spiritual evolution of Nature is still in process and incomplete, — one might almost say, still only beginning, — and its main preoccupation has been to affirm and develop a basis of spiritual consciousness and knowledge and to create more and more a foundation or formation for the vision of that which is eternal in the truth of the spirit. It is only when Nature has fully confirmed this intensive evolution and formation through the individual that anything radical of an expanding or dynamically diffusive character can be expected or any attempt at collective spiritual life, — such attempts have been made, but mostly as a field of protection for the growth of the individual's spirituality, — acquire a successful permanence. For till then the individual must be preoccupied with his own problem of entirely changing his mind and life into conformity with the truth of the spirit which he is achieving or has achieved in his inner being and knowledge. Any premature attempt at a large-scale collective spiritual life is exposed to vitiation by some incompleteness of the spiritual knowledge on its dynamic side, by the imperfections of the individual seekers and by the invasion of the ordinary mind and vital and physical consciousness taking hold of the truth and mechanising, obscuring or corrupting it. The mental intelligence and its main power of reason cannot change the principle and persistent character of human

life, it can only effect various mechanisations, manipulations, developments and formulations. But neither is mind as a whole, even spiritualised, able to change it; spirituality liberates and illumines the inner being, it helps mind to communicate with what is higher than itself, to escape even from itself, it can purify and uplift by the inner influence the outward nature of individual human beings: but so long as it has to work in the human mass through mind as the instrument, it can exercise an influence on the earth-life but not bring about a transformation of that life. For this reason there has been a prevalent tendency in the spiritual mind to be satisfied with such an influence and in the main to seek fulfilment in other-life elsewhere or to abandon altogether any outward-going endeavour and concentrate solely on an individual spiritual salvation or perfection. A higher instrumental dynamis than mind is needed to transform totally a nature created by the Ignorance."

The Life Divine, SABCL, Vol. 19, pp. 885–86

Sweet Mother, what is the meaning of "spirituality... helps mind... to escape from itself"?

As long as the mind is convinced that it is the summit of human consciousness, that there is nothing beyond and above it, it takes its own functioning to be a perfect one and is fully satisfied with the progress it can make within the limits of this functioning, and with an increase of clarity, precision, complexity, suppleness, plasticity in its movements.

It always has a spontaneous tendency to feel very satisfied with itself and with what it can do, and if there were no greater force than its own, a higher power which irrefutably shows it its own limitations, its poverty, it would never make any effort to find its way out of all that by the right door: liberation into a higher and truer mode of being.

When the spiritual force is able to act, when it begins to have an influence, it jolts the mind's self-satisfaction and, by continuous pressure, begins to make it feel that beyond it there is something higher and truer; then a little of its characteristic vanity gives way under this influence and as soon as it realises that it is limited, ignorant, incapable of reaching the true truth, liberation begins with the possibility of opening to something beyond. But it must *feel* the power, the beauty, the force of this beyond to be able to surrender. It must be able to perceive its incapacity and its limitations in the presence of something higher than itself, otherwise how could it ever feel its own weakness!

Sometimes one single contact is enough, something that makes a little rent in that self-satisfaction; then the yearning to go beyond, the need for a purer light awaken, and with this awakening comes the aspiration to win them, and with the aspiration liberation begins, and one day, breaking all limits, one blossoms in the infinite Light.

If there were not this constant Pressure, simultaneously from within and without, from above and from the profoundest depths, nothing would ever change.

Even with that, how much time is required for things to change! What obstinate resistance in this lower nature, what blind and stupid attachment to the animal ways of the being, what a refusal to liberate oneself!

(*Silence*)

In the whole manifestation there is an infinite Grace constantly at work to bring the world out of the misery, the obscurity and the stupidity in which it lies. From all time this Grace has been at work, unremitting in its effort, and how many thousands of years were necessary for this world to awaken to the need for something greater, more true, more beautiful.

Everyone can gauge, from the resistance he meets in his own

being, the tremendous resistance which the world opposes to the work of the Grace.

And it is only when one understands that *all* external things, all mental constructions, all material efforts are vain, futile, if they are not entirely consecrated to this Light and Force from above, to this Truth which is trying to express itself, that one is ready to make decisive progress. So the only truly effective attitude is a perfect, total, fervent giving of our being to That which is above us and which alone has the power to change everything.

When you open to the Spirit within you it brings you a first foretaste of that higher life which alone is worth living, then comes the will to rise to that, the hope of reaching it, the certitude that this is possible, and finally the strength to make the necessary effort and the resolution to go to the very end.

First one must wake up, then one can conquer.

5 November 1958

"Spiritual truth is a truth of the spirit, not a truth of the intellect, not a mathematical theorem or a logical formula. It is a truth of the Infinite, one in an infinite diversity, and it can assume an infinite variety of aspects and formations: in the spiritual evolution it is inevitable that there should be a many-sided passage and reaching to the one Truth, a many-sided seizing of it; this many-sidedness is the sign of the approach of the soul to a living reality, not to an abstraction or a constructed figure of things that can be petrified into a dead or stony formula. The hard logical and intellectual notion of truth as a single idea which all must accept, one idea or system of ideas defeating all other ideas or systems, or a single limited fact or single formula of facts which all must recognise, is an illegitimate transference from the limited truth of the physical field to the much more complex and plastic field of life and mind and spirit....

"In the evolution of the spiritual man there must necessarily be many stages and in each stage a great variety of individual formations of the being, the consciousness, the life, the temperament, the ideas, the character. The nature of instrumental mind and the necessity of dealing with the life must of itself create an infinite variety according to the stage of development and the individuality of the seeker. But, apart from that, even the domain of pure spiritual self-realisation and self-expression need not be a single white monotone, here can be a great diversity in the fundamental unity; the supreme Self is one, but the souls of the Self are many and, as is the soul's formation of nature, so will be its spiritual self-expression. A diversity in oneness is the

law of the manifestation; the supramental unification and integration must harmonise these diversities, but to abolish them is not the intention of the Spirit in Nature."

The Life Divine, SABCL, Vol. 19, pp. 886–88

From the point of view of individual development and for those who are still at the beginning of the path, to know how to remain silent before what one does not understand is one of the things which would help most in the progress — to know how to remain silent, not only externally, without uttering a word, but also to know how to be silent within, so that the mind does not assert its ignorance with its usual presumptuousness, does not try to understand with an instrument that is incapable of understanding, that it may know its own weakness and open simply, quietly, waiting until the time has come for it to receive the light, because only the Light, the true Light, can give it understanding. It is not all that it has learnt nor all that it has observed nor all its so-called experience of life, it is something else which is completely beyond it. And until this something else — which is the expression of the Grace — manifests within it, if, very quietly, very modestly the mind remains silent and does not try to understand and, above all, to judge, things would go *much* faster.

The noise made by all the words, all the ideas in your head is so deafening that it prevents you from hearing the truth when it wants to manifest.

To learn to be quiet and silent... When you have a problem to solve, instead of turning over in your head all the possibilities, all the consequences, all the possible things one should or should not do, if you remain quiet with an aspiration for goodwill, if possible a need for goodwill, the solution comes very quickly. And as you are silent you are able to hear it.

When you are caught in a difficulty, try this method: instead of becoming agitated, turning over all the ideas and actively seeking solutions, of worrying, fretting, running here and there

inside your head — I don't mean externally, for externally you probably have enough common sense not to do that! but inside, in your head — *remain quiet*. And according to your nature, with ardour or peace, with intensity or widening or with all these together, implore the Light and wait for it to come.

In this way the path would be considerably shortened.

12 November 1958

"If it is the sole intention of Nature in the evolution of the spiritual man to awaken him to the supreme Reality and release him from herself, or from the Ignorance in which she as the Power of the Eternal has masked herself, by a departure into a higher status of being elsewhere, if this step in the evolution is a close and an exit, then in the essence her work has been already accomplished and there is nothing more to be done. The ways have been built, the capacity to follow them has been developed, the goal or last height of the creation is manifest; all that is left is for each soul to reach individually the right stage and turn of its development, enter into the spiritual ways and pass by its own chosen path out of this inferior existence. But we have supposed that there is a farther intention, — not only a revelation of the Spirit, but a radical and integral transformation of Nature. There is a will in her to effectuate a true manifestation of the embodied life of the Spirit, to complete what she has begun by a passage from the Ignorance to the Knowledge, to throw off her mask and to reveal herself as the luminous Consciousness-Force carrying in her the eternal Existence and its universal Delight of being. It then becomes obvious that there is something not yet accomplished, there becomes clear to view the much that has still to be done, bhūri aspaṣṭa kartvam*; there is a height still to be reached, a wideness still to be covered by the eye of vision, the wing of the will, the self-affirmation of the Spirit in the material universe. What the evolutionary Power has done is to make a few individuals aware of their souls, conscious of their selves, aware of the eternal being that they are, to put them into communion with*

the Divinity or the Reality which is concealed by her appearances: a certain change of nature prepares, accompanies or follows upon this illumination, but it is not the complete and radical change which establishes a secure and settled new principle, a new creation, a permanent new order of being in the field of terrestrial Nature. The spiritual man has evolved, but not the supramental being who shall thenceforward be the leader of that Nature."

The Life Divine, SABCL, Vol. 19, pp. 889–90

Sweet Mother, how can one find the right stage and turn of one's development?

How can you find it!... You must look for it. You must want it persistently. It must be *the* important thing for you.

(*Silence*)

What happens most often when one makes the inner effort that's needed to discover one's soul, to unite with it and allow it to govern one's life, is a kind of marvellous enchantment with this discovery, as a result of which the first instinct is to tell oneself, "Now I have what I need, I have found infinite delight!" and no longer to be concerned with anything else.

In fact this is what has happened to almost all those who have made this discovery, and some of them have even set up this experience as a principle of realisation and said, "When you have done that, everything is done, there is nothing more to do; you have reached the goal and the end of the road."

Indeed, a great courage is necessary to go farther; this soul one discovers must be an intrepid warrior soul which does not at all rest satisfied with its own inner joy while comforting itself for the unhappiness of others with the idea that sooner or later everybody will reach that state and that it is good for others to make the same effort that one has made or, at best, that from

this state of inner wisdom one can, with "great benevolence" and "deep compassion" help others to reach it, and that when everybody has attained it, well, that will be the end of the world and that's so much the better for those who don't like suffering!

But... there is a "but". Are you sure that this was the aim and intention of the Supreme when he manifested?

(*Silence*)

The whole creation, the whole universal manifestation appears at best like a very bad joke if it only comes to this. Why begin at all if it is only to get out of it! What is the use of having struggled so much, suffered so much, of having created something which, at least in its external appearance, is so tragic and dramatic, if it is simply to teach you how to get out of it — it would have been better not to begin at all.

But if one goes to the very depth of things, if, stripped not only of all egoism but also of the ego, one gives oneself totally, without reserve, so completely and disinterestedly that one becomes capable of understanding the plan of the Lord, then one knows that it is *not* a bad joke, *not* a tortuous path by which you return, a little battered, to the starting-point; on the contrary, it is to teach the entire creation the delight of being, the beauty of being, the greatness of being, the majesty of a sublime life, and the perpetual growth, perpetually progressive, of that delight, that beauty, that greatness. Then everything has a meaning, then one no longer regrets having struggled and suffered, one has only the enthusiasm to realise the divine goal, and one plunges headlong into the realisation with the *certitude* of the goal and victory.

But to know that, one must stop being egoistic, being a separate person turned in on oneself and cut off from the supreme origin. That is what must be done: to cast off one's ego. Then one can know the true goal — and this is the only way!

To cast off one's ego, to let it fall off like a useless garment.

The result is worth the efforts that must be made. And then, one is not all alone on the way. One is helped, if one has trust.

If you have had even a second's contact with the Grace — that marvellous Grace which carries you along, speeds you on the path, even makes you forget that you have to hurry — if you have had only a second's contact with that, then you can strive not to forget. And with the candour of a child, the simplicity of a child for whom there are no complications, give yourself to that Grace and let it do everything.

What is necessary is not to listen to what resists, not to believe what contradicts — to have trust, a real trust, a confidence which makes you give yourself fully without calculating, without bargaining. Trust! The trust that says, "Do this, do this for me, I leave it to You."

That is the best way.

26 November 1958

"As Mind is established here on a basis of Ignorance seeking for Knowledge and growing into Knowledge, so Supermind must be established here on a basis of Knowledge growing into its own greater Light. But this cannot be so long as the spiritual-mental being has not risen fully to Supermind and brought down its powers into terrestrial existence. For the gulf between Mind and Supermind has to be bridged, the closed passages opened and roads of ascent and descent created where there is now a void and a silence. This can be done only by the triple transformation to which we have already made a passing reference: there must first be the psychic change, the conversion of our whole present nature into a soul-instrumentation; on that or along with that there must be the spiritual change, the descent of a higher Light, Knowledge, Power, Force, Bliss, Purity into the whole being, even into the lowest recesses of the life and body, even into the darkness of our subconscience; last, there must supervene the supramental transmutation, — there must take place as the crowning movement the ascent into the Supermind and the transforming descent of the supramental Consciousness into our entire being and nature."

The Life Divine, SABCL, Vol. 19, pp. 890–91

What is the role of the spirit?

One might say that it is both the conscious intermediary between the Supreme and the manifestation, and the meeting-place of the manifestation with the Supreme.

Spirit is capable of understanding and communicating with the highest Godhead and at the same time it is the purest, one might say the least distorted intermediary of the highest Godhead in the outermost manifestation. It is spirit which, with the help of the soul, turns the consciousness towards the Highest, the Divine, and it is in the spirit that the consciousness can begin to understand the Divine.

It might be said that what is called "spirit" is the atmosphere brought into the material world by the Grace so that it may awaken to the consciousness of its origin and aspire to return to it. It is indeed a kind of atmosphere which liberates, opens the doors, sets the consciousness free. This is what enables the realisation of the truth and gives aspiration its full power of accomplishment.

From a higher standpoint, this could be put in another way: it is this action, this luminous and liberating influence that is known as "spirit". All that opens to us the road to the supreme realities, pulls us out from the mud of the Ignorance in which we are stuck, opens the doors to us, shows us the path, leads us to where we have to go — this is what man has called "spirit". It is the atmosphere created by the Divine Grace in the universe to save it from the darkness into which it has fallen.

The soul is a kind of individual concentration of this Grace, its individual representative in the human being. The soul is something particular to humanity, it exists only in man. It is like a particular expression of the spirit in the human being. The beings of the other worlds do not have a soul, but they can live in the spirit. One might say that the soul is a delegation of the spirit in mankind, a special help to lead it faster. It is the soul that makes individual progress possible. The spirit, in its original form, has a more general, more collective action.

For the moment the spirit plays the part of a helper and guide, but it is not the all-powerful master of the material manifestation; when the Supermind is organised into a new world,

the spirit will become the master and govern Nature in a clear and visible way.

What is called "new birth" is the birth into the spiritual life, the spiritual consciousness; it is to carry in oneself something of the spirit which, individually, through the soul, can begin to rule the life and be the master of existence. But in the supramental world, the spirit will be the master of this entire world and all its manifestations, all its expressions, consciously, spontaneously, naturally.

In the individual existence, that is what makes all the difference; so long as one just speaks of the spirit and it is something one has read about, whose existence one vaguely knows about, but not a very concrete reality for the consciousness, this means that one is not born into the spirit. And when one is born into the spirit, it becomes something much more concrete, much more living, much more real, much more tangible than the whole material world. And this is what makes the essential difference between beings. When *that* becomes spontaneously real — the true, concrete existence, the atmosphere one can freely breathe — then one knows one has crossed over to the other side. But so long as it is something rather vague and hazy — you have heard about it, you know that it exists, but... it has no concrete reality — well, this means that the new birth has not yet taken place. As long as you tell yourself, "Yes, this I can see, this I can touch, the pain I suffer from, the hunger that torments me, the sleep that makes me feel heavy, this is real, this is concrete..." (*Mother laughs*), that means that you have not yet crossed over to the other side, you are not born into the spirit.

(*Silence*)

In fact, the vast majority of men are like prisoners with all the doors and windows closed, so they suffocate, which is quite natural. But they have with them the key that opens the doors and windows, and they do not use it.... Certainly there is a time

when they don't know they have the key, but long after they have come to know it, long after they have been told about it, they hesitate to use it and doubt whether it has the power to open the doors and windows or even that it is a good thing to open them! And even when they feel that "after all, it might be good", there remains some fear: "What will happen when these doors and windows are opened?..." and they are afraid. They are afraid of being lost in that light and freedom. They want to remain what they call "themselves". They like their falsehood and their bondage. Something in them likes it and goes on clinging to it. They still have the impression that without their limits they would no longer exist.

That is why the journey is so long, that is why it is difficult. For if one truly consented to cease to exist, everything would become so easy, so swift, so luminous, so joyful — but perhaps not in the way men understand joy and ease. In truth, there are very few people who do not enjoy fighting. There are very few who could accept the absence of night, few can conceive of light except as the opposite of darkness: "Without shadows there would be no picture. Without struggle, there would be no victory. Without suffering there would be no joy." That is what they think, and so long as one thinks in this way, one is not yet born into the spirit.

This is the last of the Wednesday evening classes given at the Ashram Playground.

Note on the Text

These conversations of 1957 and 1958 were spoken by the Mother in French and appear here in English translation. All of them were tape-recorded. Passages from some of these conversations were published in the French original with an English translation in issues of the *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education* between 1957 and 1963. In 1973 a new English translation of all the conversations was brought out as a book entitled *Questions and Answers 1957 & 1958*. The same book, with minor revisions of the translation, was published in 1977 under the title *Questions and Answers 1957–58* as Volume 9 of the Collected Works of the Mother (first edition). The present volume, which is part of the second edition of the Collected Works of the Mother, has the same text as the first edition, except for some minor revisions of the translation.

Passages from the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are sometimes quoted in the text and footnotes. The sources of these works are the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, (SABCL) and the Collected Works of the Mother (CWM), second edition.