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This talk is based upon Sri Aurobindo's *Bases of Yoga*, Chapter 1, "Calm—Peace—Equality".

Sweet Mother, what is "the freedom of the Self"?

It means that in the true inner being one feels perfectly free, and is free from everything. One has the feeling of a complete freedom — free from all external influences, free from all lower impulses, free from all bondage of thoughts, habits... (*Silence*) There, then.

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

Here I did not understand: "not to stand back for any reason from her [the Mother's] solicitude".

What? For no reason to stand back from her solicitude? You do not understand that? Why! Why don't you understand? You don't understand what this means or what? "Stand back" — do you not know what that means?

No.

Ah, all right. Well, stand back means to withdraw, go farther away, escape, refuse, reject — all this.

"Solicitude" — do you know what that means?

Not very well.

Not very well? It is... well, it is "care" in English, that is, attention, help, concern, precisely the concern to help and do good; this is solicitude. When you feel solicitude for someone, you

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do... you find out his needs and try to satisfy them; you have good thoughts, good feelings, you want to help, support, make him happy. This is solicitude. So, to stand back from solicitude is to refuse these things when they come, either to disregard them or refuse them.

However, very often one does it without knowing it. For example, every feeling of independence, of the need to look after oneself, of not wanting to submit to any discipline, any rule, of standing on one's own feet, not wanting any support except one's own, and being free, independent in one's movements: this is to stand back from the divine solicitude. To want to do what one likes, one's own will, in quite a free and independent way — "only doing what I want" — this is to stand back from the divine solicitude.

One does it quite frequently!

(To a child) You?

Sometimes when we ask you a question, you do not understand it. Is it because of a fault in our language or in the consciousness?

Usually the consciousness.

There is an experience like this: some people may speak to me for half an hour, I don't understand a tenth part of what they say; there are others who speak very softly, very slowly, very gently, and I don't miss a single word. In one case, it is... it does not depend on the elocution and it does not depend on the expression, because I am used to understanding people even when they express themselves badly. I have been used to this for years. It is not that. It is that either they do not think clearly, or rather, to put it positively: those who think quite clearly, no matter what they say or how they say it, I understand them; while with those who do not think clearly it becomes more difficult; and then, those who are in the habit of disguising their thought, who are not frank, who don't say exactly what they think or

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feel, who try to present things in a particular way, here, they may give me long speeches, I understand nothing. And I know what they are thinking but I don't know what they are saying. This happens very frequently: people talk to me, I hear nothing. It happens like that, I don't hear... "What? what? what?" And then, when it recurs twice or thrice, I am sure that it is this kind of thing, you know: they are not saying what they think, they are saying something with the intention of making some sort of impression, you see. They say this so that I may think so. So there it is useless, I don't hear them. There are different degrees.

Is that all? (*To a child*) And you? Nothing? Nobody has any questions? It is not raining here, we see! (*Laughter*)

(In a low voice) *Sweet Mother, is passion a weakness...*

Ah, listen! I do not hear!

Is passion a weakness of the heart?

I have not yet understood. "*Pensée*", that's all I have heard. (*The child hesitates*) Eh? Say, say, speak, but think of what you are saying.

(In a loud voice) *Passion.* (The child laughs).

Ah!

(Another child) *Passion!*

(Pavitra) *Passion!*

Passion! And I heard "*pensée*"! Good. So what about passion?

Is it a weakness of the heart?

Weakness? No, it is a disorder of the vital. (*Silence*) The feeling

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comes from the heart and then the vital gets hold of it and turns it into a passion. (*Silence*) And one step farther, and it becomes a madness. (*Silence*) So?

Sweet Mother, how can we call down calm when we are too agitated?

(*Silence*) Repeat that. How...?

How can we call calm...?

Oh, "call"? Well, well. Make calm come to us, you mean? How? Simply as when you want to call someone, you call him, don't you? (*Laughter*) It is the same thing. You must remain as calm as you can and wish for calm, aspire for calm, call calm, like that, remaining as calm as you can at that moment. Ask to be yet calmer. Want calm. But all this calmly, because if you want it agitatedly, calm will not come.

Sometimes when one wants to concentrate, usually there are disturbing thoughts, but often some kind of images pass before...

Do you see images when you meditate?

Sometimes.

When the eyes are open or closed?

Closed.

Closed. And what images? Colours or images?

Sometimes colours, sometimes images.

Well... Always or only sometimes?

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Not always.

And so? You are asking what it is? It can be many, many things. It can be simply that, your physical eyes being closed, your inner eyes open and begin to see in their domain or in the subtle physical or the most material vital, it may be that.

It can be a projection of your own thoughts, that is, when you begin reflecting on something, certain images pass before you, like that; they pass rather before your mind than your eyes, and it is like an imaged objectivisation of your thought, your state of thought or state of consciousness. But then, it becomes quite clear, coherent and it is interesting. It can serve as an indication.

It can be something else also. If you are truly quiet and your mind is quiet, it can be... how shall I put it?... some kind of messages coming to you from other people or other worlds or other forces, which come to tell you something, to show you something; usually, if you see colours which are... pulsating, and then suddenly it is as though you were absorbing them: this usually indicates forces sent by someone or something, which come with some sort of power. They are some kind of messages. So, if you are very quiet in your mind, sometimes they bring an indication of what they mean.

Many things are possible and you must observe very attentively, but very quietly, without any mental activity, without seeking to understand at that time; because as soon as your mind becomes active and tries to understand, it will jam everything and probably you will not see anything any more.

But if you remain very quiet, only if you observe — as though you were silently looking at something, you understand — then you will begin seeing more precisely, and little by little distinguishing between different categories of things. You will be able to know what one thing is and what another etc., whether it comes from you or from outside, whether it is on a material plane or on another plane. All this is learnt through a very

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quiet observation, quiet but very sharp, you understand; because there are very tiny shades, very tiny, between different things, and when you get used to distinguishing these nuances, you can discern exactly what it is.

It is always the same thing. One must be very quiet, very attentive, calm the mind as much as possible, because as soon as it begins to stir, the phenomenon is distorted.

In any case, in a very general way, this proves that the inner vision is beginning to develop or is developed.

(Silence)

Nothing more? Do you have another question?

Regarding the film we saw, what is the place of suffering in artistic creation?

The film?

We saw that through suffering...

Oh,oh, oh, oh!... the film about Berlioz?

His music matured through suffering...

Yes, yes, so what place...? Where does it come from?

Suffering — how does it help artistic creation?

How does it help? That depends on people. Some people are very powerfully helped by it. I consider that man one of the purest expressions of music. It is almost... I could say that he is an incarnation of music, of the spirit of music. Unfortunately his body was a little frail; that is, he did not have that solid base which yoga gives, for instance. So this shook him up too

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much, and made him too emotional, nervous, agitated, emotive. You see, it was a serious weakness. But from the point of view of creation, I have always felt — and the other day it was very strong — that truly he was in contact with the spirit of music, you know, the very meaning of music, and that this entered into him with such a force that it shook him up; but truly, truly he was like an incarnation of music.

The notion that it was suffering that made him create is purely human; it is not true. What, on the contrary, is very remarkable is — to turn the thing around — that there was no physical pain which was not instantaneously translated into music in him; that is, the spirit of music was much stronger than human pain, and each blow which he received from life — and as he was indeed too sensitive to have the power of resisting, he was shaken — all the same, instantly, it was translated into music. It is something very rare.

People — all creators — usually require a little... how shall I put it?... time and quietness to be able to begin creating again, while with him it was spontaneous. The painful blow brought musical expression instantaneously. Truly for him his whole life began with music, finished with music. It was music and it was a... he had such a sincerity and such an exclusive intensity in his attachment to music that I feel that the spirit of music expressed itself through him. Perhaps what he has written is not the *most* beautiful music, because of that kind of weakness of what we call the “*ādhāra*” here. He was... his physical make-up was a little too weak. But from the point of view of music, it is very beautiful, very beautiful. (*Silence*) And even with his power he had a very great simplicity. There is a kind of limpidity of line in what he has written, with a very great technical knowledge, of course. His power of orchestration was very, very remarkable. When one can orchestrate something for six hundred performers, it means a science as complicated as the most complicated mathematics. And in fact they come very close.

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I knew a musician who was not at all his equal but was still a very good musician, and he used to compose. He composed operas, musical comedies, and music for... well, not concert music. In front of a sheet of paper... you see, he had a large sheet of paper and on it he wrote the names of the different instruments; and beside each one he wrote simply, just like that, what it had to play. He was a friend of mine, you know, I used to see him at work. It was as though he was writing equations, like that. When it was finished, it had only to be given to an orchestra, it became something magnificent. Sometimes even... The other man, you noticed how he played his theme on the piano, didn't you? He played a few notes, almost nothing, it seemed just two or three notes, like that: it was his theme. And on this theme, then, suddenly he began to write. But this man usually did not even play his theme on the piano, he wrote directly. It is a particular cerebral formation. There are others who compose exclusively on the piano and someone else has to write for them. Another person has to do this work of giving the different notes and organising the notes to reproduce the harmony created. But this man I am talking about — great musicians like Saint-Saëns, for example, the musicians of his time, gave him their compositions for orchestration. They wrote them, you see, as one writes for the piano, for two hands; and he changed that into orchestra music. He orchestrated just as I said, like that, separating the different groups of instruments and putting down beside each the part it had to play.

(Silence)

Mother, when one hears music, how should one truly hear it?

For this — if one can be completely silent, you see, silent and attentive, simply as though one were an instrument which has to record it — one does not move, and is only something that

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is listening — if one can be absolutely silent, absolutely still and like that, then the thing enters. And it is only later, some time later, that you can become aware of the effect, either of what it meant or the impression it had on you.

But the best way of listening is this. It is to be like a still mirror and very concentrated, very silent. In fact, we see people who truly love music... I have seen musicians listening to music, musicians, composers or players who truly love music, I have seen them listening to music... they sit completely still, you know, they are like that, they do not move at all. Everything, everything is like that. And if one can stop thinking, then it is very good, then one profits fully... It is one of the methods of inner opening and one of the most powerful.

(Long silence)

Is that all?

Mother, when one gets a shock, some kind of pain, should one try to express it either through music or poetry, unless it comes spontaneously?

Express it? If one has the gift; otherwise it is not worthwhile. But if one has the gift it is good.

There are different depths in these shocks. They are not all on the same plane. Usually people receive emotional or sentimental shocks altogether superficially, and that is why they weep, they cry, they... sometimes gesticulate. Anyway, these are shocks in the outer crust. But there is a greater depth where usually you receive silently, but which awakens in you a creative vibration and a need to formulate. Then, if one is a poet he writes poetry, if one is a musician he composes music, if one is a writer he writes a story, and if one is a philosopher he expresses his state, describes his state.

Now, there is a greater depth of pain which leaves you in

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an absolute silence and opens the inner doors to greater depths which can put you in immediate touch with the Divine. But this indeed is not expressed in words. It changes your consciousness; but usually a long time elapses before one can say anything about it.

Berlioz, of course, was in the second category.

(Long silence)

There then, is that all?

Mother, every Sunday you play the organ and you always play well. But sometimes we feel that you play better!

Eh?

Every time you play well, no doubt, but sometimes we feel that you play better.

Sometimes you feel, sometimes you don't, sometimes you like it, sometimes you don't, sometimes you understand, sometimes you don't understand, and sometimes I play well and sometimes I play badly. *(Laughter)*

This depends on many things, above all on the state you are in yourself. It may depend a great deal on the region which seeks expression in the music. There are some which are accessible, there are others which are more difficult to understand or receive; but usually it depends almost exclusively on the condition you yourself are in. The day you are well disposed, you like it; the day you are ill-disposed you don't understand. There are days when it puts you to sleep, there are days when it pleases you; on some days you have the feeling that it opens a horizon before you, on others you say, "don't know, don't understand"! So, there. It depends altogether on one's own condition.

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Mother, when you play, do you decide beforehand from which region the music has to come?

Eh?

On Sundays, when you play, do you decide beforehand from what region the music has to come?

I?

From where does it come?

Before sitting down I don't even know what notes I am going to play. The region? It is always the same region. This is why I can speak with some experience about the origin of Berlioz's music, because it is a region very well known to me, one I frequent assiduously. But I do not at all know what will come. Nothing at all, nothing. I don't even decide what feeling or idea or state of consciousness is going to be expressed, nothing. I am like a blank page. I come and sit down, concentrate for a minute and let it come. Afterwards, sometimes I know, not always. But when I hear it a second time here, in the afternoon or evening, then I know; because it is no longer I, it is something that comes from outside. So then I know quite well what it is like.

But one day, Sweet Mother, you told everybody what you were going to play.

Yes, that day I knew what I was going to play. This may happen.

There are times when I know, others when I don't. Only, there are days when, if I had at my disposal an orchestra of two hundred players, it would be very interesting. The means are poor; that is, the music I sense, which comes to me, would be expressed very well as... by what we saw the other evening in the film. It would need, you see, an expression of that kind

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to be expressed fully. So it has to be collected as in a dropper, you know, and then given out drop by drop, like that. And so naturally it is much impoverished. It doesn't come to much. The greater part escapes.

There. Now I think it is finished. Nothing else that's important, interesting, urgent? (*Looking at a child searching her text*) Oh dear! She still has her nose in her book.

Here I did not understand...

Did not understand! There are many things you have not understood. (*Laughter*)

"What is happening in you is that the consciousness is trying to fix itself in this liberation."

So, what did you not understand?

"What is happening in you is that the consciousness is trying..."

He is answering—it is always the same thing—answering something the person writing the letter has asked... an experience he had or something he has described. He is answering that and says, "This is..." the explanation of what happened. So it doesn't mean anything else except what it says. It is an explanation. What the experience was he doesn't say. Don't understand, eh?

Mother, there are many elements in our being of which we are not conscious. Isn't that so?

Yes, many.

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Can there be some parts which serve the Divine without our being aware of it?

Yes, yes. In fact there are some which not only always seek the Divine but have an intense aspiration, and one is not aware of them. The psychic being is like that, and it is always there. But one becomes aware of it only very rarely. It is so veiled, you see. I spoke a while ago of the outer crust. It is really like a crust. It is something hard, thick, without any transparency, which lets no vibrations pass, and one lives so constantly inside this that one is not even aware that there is something else. But there is, there is indeed right in the depths of the being — specially of those who are predestined, that's understood, but still — a being which not only presides over one's destiny, not only aspires for identification with the Divine, but has the power to govern the circumstances of life and, in fact, to organise them in spite of the outer will which very often revolts and does not want the circumstances as this inner consciousness — which is fully clear-sighted — has organised them. And it is only much later, when one becomes aware of it and looks back at his life, that one realises that all this was wonderfully organised with a complete clear-sightedness of what was necessary, in order to lead him there, just where he had to go.

Most often the things which you took for accidents or misfortunes or even tragedies or even for the blows of fate, for attacks of the adverse forces, all this, almost all without any exception, was a marvellously perspicacious and admirably executed plan to lead you just where you had to go by the shortest road.

Of course this is not always absolute, because it depends on the importance of the individual in relation to the importance of the surrounding circumstances. That is why I said at the beginning: every predestined being. What I mean by "predestined" is a being who has come down upon earth to accomplish a precise mission and who, naturally, will be helped in the

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accomplishment of this mission. It may be a very modest mission but it is a precise one that he has to accomplish upon earth. Well, all these beings... their life is organised in this way; but ninety-nine and a half per cent are not aware of it, and they revolt or lament or... And then, above all, they pity themselves greatly and lament their own difficulties, their own miseries, their own sufferings, and caress themselves gently: "Oh, my poor little one, how unhappy you are!" But it is their inner being which has done everything.

There we are.

Au revoir, my children.