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This talk is based upon *Bases of Yoga*, Chapter 3, “In Difficulty”.

*“To question, to resist in some part of the being increases trouble and difficulties.”*

For instance, when the guru tells you to do something, if you begin to ask, “Why should I do it? What is the necessity of doing it? Explain to me what I must do. Why do I have to do it?” This is called questioning.

To resist means to try to evade the order and not accomplish it. So naturally this increases the difficulties very much. There is the explanation later. Sri Aurobindo says that this was the reason why an absolute unquestioning surrender was demanded; no argument was allowed in those days. You were told, “Do this”; it had to be done. You were told, “Don’t do it”; it had not to be done, and nobody had the right to ask why. If one didn’t understand, so much the worse for him.

It’s not like that here. You have the right to ask all that you want. Only, it is true that there are times when it doesn’t help. If one begins to argue in his mind, “Why have we been told to do this? Why are we told not to do that?” and so on, this does not help. It increases difficulties very much, it hardens the consciousness, it puts a thick shell over it and so prevents it from being receptive. It is as though you were putting a varnish upon something to prevent its being touched.

*Does the mind aspire?*

That means? When the mind aspires, it aspires.

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*“... the mental will and the psychic aspiration must be your support.”*

Yes, but the mind also can aspire. But psychic aspiration is more powerful than mental aspiration, and the mind must have its own will. If one speaks of the mental will and the psychic aspiration it does not mean that the mind has no aspiration and the psychic no will. It is just saying what is the most important thing in each of these. But it doesn't mean that it has only this. It can have all the other movements too.

*Sometimes when I want to know something, it seems to me that a door is closed in my heart, and then it opens and everything becomes very clear.*

Yes, that's quite true.

*What is it?*

What is it? It is because you have no contact with your psychic being when the door is closed. And if the door opens, then naturally you will benefit by all the psychic consciousness, and will know the things you want to.

*Sweet Mother, here Sri Aurobindo says, “... the difficulty faced in the right spirit and conquered, one finds that an obstacle has disappeared.” What is the right spirit?*

Ah, I was expecting this question. The right spirit means what he has explained in the following sentence: to keep one's trust, to remain quiet—I think it is there a little farther off—wait patiently for the attack to pass, keep one's trust. It is not there? Then it is in another passage. In any case the right spirit means not to lose courage, not to lose one's faith, not to be impatient, not to be depressed; to remain very quiet and peaceful with as

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much aspiration as one can have, and not worry about what is happening. To have the certitude that this will pass and all will be well. This indeed is the best thing.

*Not to be depressed means...?*

Not to be depressed — it is extremely important. Depression is a sign of weakness, of a bad will somewhere, and bad will in the sense of a refusal to receive help, and a kind of weakness that's content to be weak. One becomes slack. The bad will is obvious, because there's a part of your being which tells you at that moment, "Depression is bad." You know that you shouldn't get depressed; well, the reply of that part which is depressed is almost, "Shut up! I want my depression." Try, you will see, you can try. It is always like that. Eh, it is not true? And then later one says again, "Afterwards, afterwards I shall see... for the moment I want it, and besides I have my reasons." There you are. It is a kind of revolt, a weak revolt, the revolt of something weak in the being.

*Here he speaks of "the change of which this depression is a stage..."*

Yes. When one comes out of the depression and one's bad will, well, then one realises that there was an attack and that some progress had to be made, and that in spite of everything something within has made progress, that one has taken a step forward. Usually, hardly consciously, it is something which needs to progress but doesn't want to, and so takes this way; like a child who sulks, becomes low-spirited, sad, unhappy, misunderstood, abandoned, helpless; and then, refusing to collaborate, and as I just said, indulging in his depression, to show that he is not happy. It is specially in order to show that one is not satisfied that one becomes depressed. One can show it to Nature, one can show it (that depends on the case, you see), one can show it

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to the Divine, one can show it to the people around one, but it is always a kind of way of expressing one's dissatisfaction. "I am not happy about what you demand", but this means, "I am not happy. And I shall make you too see it, that I am not happy." There you are.

But when it is over, and when for some reason or other one has made the necessary effort to come out of it, and has come out, one usually realises that something in the being has changed, because, in spite of all bad will, most often the progress was accomplished — not very swiftly, not very brilliantly, not for one's greater glory, surely, but still the progress was made. Something has changed. That's all?

*Mother, here Sri Aurobindo has spoken of "the formation of ego-individuality". Ego-individuality means...?*

There are individual egos and collective egos. For example, the national ego is a collective ego. A group may have a collective ego. The human race has a collective ego. It is bigger or smaller. The individual ego is the ego of a particular person; it is the smallest kind of ego. Oh, there is of course a vital ego, a mental ego and a physical ego but these are minor individual egos. But this means the ego of a particular person.

One has many egos inside oneself. One becomes aware of them when one begins to destroy them: when one has destroyed an ego, that which was most troublesome, usually it creates a kind of inner cyclone. When one comes out of the storm, one feels, "Ah, now it is over, everything is done, I have destroyed the enemy inside me, all is finished." But after a while, one notices that there is another, and another still, and yet again another, and that in fact one is made of a heap of little egos which are absolutely a nuisance and which must be overcome one after another.

*Ego means what?*

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I think it is the ego that makes each one a separate being, in all possible ways. It is the ego which gives the sense of being a person separate from others. It is certainly the ego which gives you the sense of the “I”, “I am”, “I want”, “I do”, “I exist”, even the very famous “I think therefore I am” which is... I am sorry but I think it is a stupidity — but still it is a celebrated stupidity — well, this too is the ego. What gives you the impression that you are Manoj is the ego, and that you are altogether different from this one and that one; and what prevents your body from melting away like that, dissolving in a common mass of physical vibrations, is the ego; what gives you a definite form, a definite character, a separate consciousness, the sense that you exist in yourself, independently of all others, indeed, something like that; if one does not reflect, spontaneously one has the sense that even if the world disappeared, one would be there, one would remain what one is. This of course is the super-ego.

Certainly, if one were to lose one’s ego too soon, from the vital and mental point of view one would again become an amorphous mass. The ego is surely the instrument for individualisation, that is, until one is an individualised being, constituted in himself, the ego is an absolutely necessary factor. If one had the power of abolishing the ego ahead of time, one would lose one’s individuality. But once the individuality has been formed, the ego becomes not only useless but harmful. And only then comes the time when it must be abolished. But naturally, as it has taken so much trouble to build you, it does not give up its work so easily, and it asks for the reward of its efforts, that is, to enjoy the individuality.

*Even the physical formation is an ego?*

Yes, I tell you. What can it be due to if not to the ego?

Just now you were asking why there is an individual ego...

There is a family ego, and it is very interesting because it is the family ego which makes all the members of a family resemble

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each other in some way or other; they are not the same but resemble one another. One knows that they belong to the same family and if one goes far back to the ancestors, one sees that there is a similarity all down the line. Well, it is the family ego, which is much more lasting than the individual ego; and there is a national ego. And the families which are not much intermixed, you see, which have remained without intermixing very much, as for example, in the time of the aristocrats, the aristocracy did not mix much, they remained in one lineage, well, the characteristics of the ego are very clear; for instance, the Bourbon families, the families of... in France it is like that; from top to bottom, we find them very similar among themselves in their appearance. Naturally, as soon as races, species, nationalities intermix, it produces a mixture of egos. And then the horizon begins to widen. It is as when one tries to widen his mind, to understand many different things, study many languages, the knowledge of many countries and ages, one widens his ego very much, one begins to grow less narrow-minded. Naturally, with yoga one can overcome all this consciously.

*Does the collective ego depend on the individual ego of the individuals who form the collectivity?*

Yes. Usually collective egos are inferior in quality to individual egos. Instead of being a multiplication or even an addition, it becomes a diminution, usually. Psychologically it is a well-known fact. Take men individually, they show common sense. But put them all together, it makes a stupid human mass.

That's all?

*How can experience be purified?*

Sri Aurobindo has spoken at the beginning of experiences which become impure through ambition or vanity or... he explains it. And so, purification of experience means to make the experience

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sincere and motiveless. To take away all one's motives of ambition and vanity, of desire, power, etc. This is called purifying the experience, making it sincere, spontaneous and not mixing it with desires and ambitions. There are spiritual ambitions, he speaks of them, and these are even the most dangerous.

There we are. That's all?

*Mother, many people are asking whether the crisis about which you spoke to X in reference to 1957 is the same as the one of this year or whether it is different?*

Eh?

*The crisis about which you spoke to X... in 1957?*

I haven't spoken about a crisis in 1957. That is a fulfilment, not a crisis. The crisis comes before, this is the result. It is a victory, it is not a crisis. I don't know what he has written. I don't remember now. But certainly I did not speak to him about a crisis.

*"There is a possibility of a war between Russia and America over the question of India..."*

*(Mother looks surprised) In '57?*

*Yes, Mother.*

Never in my life... I never said this. And it is not there in what he has written, because I would never have let it pass. There is the possibility of a war but I didn't say '57. *(Silence)* There is the possibility of a war. Yes. Perhaps this is part of the difficulties I spoke to you about last time. But I did not place it in '57 at all.

*(Long silence)*

There we are. That's all? Finished.