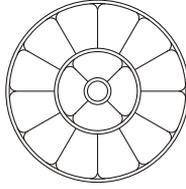


THE MOTHER

Questions and Answers
1955

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Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry

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Publisher's Note

This volume is made up of talks given by the Mother in 1955 to the members of her French class. Held on Wednesday evenings at the Ashram Playground, the class was composed of sadhaks of the Ashram and students of its school. The Mother usually began by reading out a passage from one of her works or a French translation of one of Sri Aurobindo's writings. She then commented on the passage or invited questions. For most of the year she discussed two small books by Sri Aurobindo, *Bases of Yoga* and *Lights on Yoga*, and two chapters of *The Synthesis of Yoga*. She spoke only in French. Further information on these talks and their publication is provided in the Note on the Text.

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This talk is based upon Sri Aurobindo's *Bases of Yoga*, Chapter 3, "In Difficulty".

Sweet Mother, how can we create "the attunement of the nature with the working of the Divine Light and Power"?

How can you do it? By trying.

First you must be conscious of the kind of attunement you want to realise. You must become aware of the points where this harmony does not exist; you must feel them and understand the contradiction between the inner consciousness and certain outer movements. You must become conscious of this first, and once you are conscious of it, you try to adapt the outer action, outer movements to the inner ideal. But first of all you must become aware of the disharmony. For there are many people who think that everything is going well; and if they are told, "No, your outer nature is in contradiction with your inner aspiration", they protest. They are not aware. Therefore, the first step is to become aware, to become conscious of what is not in tune.

To begin with, most people will say, "What is this inner consciousness you are telling me about? I don't know it!" So, obviously, they cannot establish any harmony if they are not even conscious of something within which is higher than their ordinary consciousness. This means that many preparatory stages are needed, preparatory states of awareness, before being ready for this harmonisation.

You must first of all know what the inner aim of the being is, the aspiration, the descending force, what receives it—everything must become conscious. And then, afterwards, you must look at the outer movements in the light of this inner

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consciousness and see what is in tune and what is not. And then, when you have seen what does not harmonise, you must gather the will and aspiration to change it and begin with the easiest part. You should not begin with the most difficult thing, you should begin with the easiest, the one you understand best, most easily, the disharmony which seems most evident to you. Then from there, gradually, you will go to the more difficult and more central things... Why do you happen to twist your ankle?...

(Silence)

Mother, last time you said that the hostile forces are going to strike a last blow this year. If the earth is not capable of winning the victory...

The earth? Did I say the earth?

The earth, India and individuals.

Yes, it is possible, it is a way of speaking. And so, if we are not able to win the victory...?

Does this mean that the possibility of transformation will be delayed?

Delayed perhaps by several centuries. This is precisely what the adverse forces are trying to bring about, and so far they have always succeeded — in putting off the thing. Always they have succeeded. “This will be for another time”, and the other time... perhaps after hundreds or thousands of years. And this is what they want to try to do once again. Perhaps all this is decreed somewhere. It is possible. But it is also possible that though it is decided, in order that the thing may take place as it ought to it is not good to reveal what is decided. There are many

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things like that, because people are neither conscious enough nor pure enough to do what they should do, exactly as they should do it, with full knowledge of the result; for the result, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, is not what they desire — or if it is what they desire, it is modified, it is mixed, diluted, there are differences, differences enough not to be fully satisfactory. So if one knew ahead exactly what was going to happen, one would remain seated, quietly, and would do nothing any longer. One would say, “Good, if this must happen, it is good, I have nothing more to do.” That is why one doesn’t know. But he who can act in all circumstances in full knowledge of the cause, knowing what the result of his action will be, and at the same time can do a certain thing which is sometimes even in contradiction with this result, that person indeed can know. But I don’t think there are many like that. In ordinary life people say that for someone to realise something, he ought always to aim much farther than the goal he has to attain; that all who have realised something in life, all the great men who have created, realised something, their aim, their ambition, their plan was always much greater, vaster, more complete, more total than what they did. They always fell short of their expectation and hope. It is a weakness, but it comes from what I said, that unless one has a very great ideal before him and the hope of realising it, one doesn’t put out all the energies of the being and therefore doesn’t do what is necessary to attain even the nearest goal, except, as I said, when one can act with the clear vision that “this is what ought to be done” and without the slightest worry about the consequences and the result of what one does; but this is difficult.

Sweet Mother, what does “a Couéistic optimism” mean?

Ah! Coué. You don’t know the story of Coué? Coué was a doctor. He used to treat by psychological treatment, auto-suggestion, and he called this the true working of the imagination;

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and what he defined as imagination was faith. And so he treated all his patients in this way: they had to make a kind of imaginative formation which consisted in thinking themselves cured or in any case on the way to being cured, and in repeating this formation to themselves with sufficient persistence for it to have its effect. He had very remarkable results. He cured lots of people; only, he failed also, and perhaps these were not very lasting cures, I don't know this. But in any case, this made many people reflect on something that's quite true and of capital importance: that the mind is a formative instrument and that if one knows how to use it in the right way, one gets a good result. He observed — and I think it is true, my observation agrees with his — that people spend their time thinking wrongly. Their mental activity is almost always half pessimistic, and even half destructive. They are all the time thinking of and foreseeing bad things which may happen, troublesome consequences of what they have done, and they construct all kinds of catastrophes with an exuberant imagination which, if it were utilised in the other way, would naturally have opposite and more satisfying results.

If you observe yourself, if you... how to put it?... if you catch yourself thinking — well, if you do it suddenly, if you look at yourself thinking all of a sudden, spontaneously, unexpectedly, you will notice that nine times out of ten you are thinking something troublesome. It is very rarely that you are thinking about harmonious, beautiful, constructive, happy things, full of hope, light and joy; you will see, try the experiment. Suddenly stop and look at yourself thinking, just like that: put a screen in front of your thought and look at yourself thinking, off-hand, you will see this at least nine times out of ten, and perhaps more. (It is very rarely, very rarely that one has in the whole day, suddenly, a dazzling thought about what is going to happen or the state one is in or the things one wants to do or the course of his life or world circumstances — it depends, you see, on your preoccupation). Well, you will see, it is almost always foreseeing

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a bigger or smaller, more or less vast catastrophe.

Say you have the slightest thing that is not getting on quite well; if you think of your body, it is always that something unpleasant is going to happen to it — because when everything goes well, you don't think about it! You will notice this: that you act, you do all that you have to do, without having a single thought about your body, and when all of a sudden you wonder whether there isn't anything that's going wrong, whether there is some uneasiness or a difficulty, something, then you begin to think of your body and you think about it with anxiety and begin to make your disastrous constructions.

Whereas Coué recommended... It was in this way that he cured his patients; he was a doctor, he told them, "You are going to repeat to yourself: 'I am being cured, gradually I am getting cured' and again, you see, 'I am strong, I am quite healthy and I can do this, I can do that'."

I knew someone who was losing her hair disastrously, by handfuls. She was made to try this method. When combing her hair she made herself think, "My hair will not fall out." The first and second time it did not work, but she continued and each time before combing the hair she used to repeat with insistence, "I am going to comb my hair but it won't fall out." And within a month her hair stopped falling. Later she again continued thinking, "Now my hair will grow." And she succeeded so well that I saw her with a magnificent head of hair, and it was she herself who told me this, that this was what she had done after being on the point of becoming bald. It is very, very effective. Only, while one is making the formation, another part of the mind must not say, "Oh, I am making a formation and it is not going to be successful", because in this way you undo your own work.

Coué — it was at the beginning of the century, I think... (*Mother turns to Pavitra.*)

(Pavitra) *I saw him in 1917 or 1918 in Paris.*

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Yes, that's right, the beginning of the century, the first quarter of the century. You knew him?

(Pavitra) *In Paris, yes.*

Ah, ah! Tell us about it.

(Pavitra) *I heard one or two of his lectures. The method he gave to the sick was to repeat, first every morning and several times a day, "I am becoming better and better, every day I am better and better, each day I am healthier", every morning, every evening, several times a day, with conviction, clasping the hands like this...*

Oh! If one lost one's temper: "I am becoming better and better, I don't lose my temper now." (*Laughter*)

(Pavitra) *Every day I am becoming more and more intelligent.*

That's really good. Why, and if you repeat to a child, if you make him repeat, "I am good, day by day more and more."

"I am better and better, I am more and more obedient."

Oh, but this is very fine. (*To a child*) The other day you wanted to know what to do for children who are difficult to bring up. Here you are, you can try this. "I am more and more regular at school."

And then again, "I don't tell lies any more. I shall never lie again."

(Pavitra) *At first it was to be said in the future and afterwards one drew closer to the future and so finished in the present.*

Oh, one finishes in the present. And how long did it take?

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(Pavitra) *It depended on the person.*

It depends on the case. "I shall not tell lies again, it is my last lie." (*Laughter*)

So, we stop.

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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.

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

Sweet Mother, what is the work of the higher mind?

Work? What exactly do you want to know? What it ought to do? Or what should one...?

Its role.

The role of the higher mind? It ought to receive inspirations from above, ought to transmit them in the form of ideas to the most material mind, so that the latter may execute things, make formations. It serves as an intermediary between the higher power and the active mind. The higher mind is a mind of ideation and at the same time... (*The noise of the wind drowns Mother's voice for a moment.*)

That's its purpose. It can also try to give some understanding of things which are above the more ordinary mentality, to explain, to clarify general ideas and the principles which go beyond them.

Sweet Mother, if the hostile forces were not there, could we not progress?

If the world were not there, it wouldn't be there. “If”! The moment you put an “if”, your question no longer makes sense. Things are as they are because they are as they are. They are like that because they have to be like that; otherwise they would not be like that. So one can't say, “If it were not like that, how would it be?” That's a question which makes no sense. It is like that, it is like that.

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If you change anything at all in the world, it becomes another world. If you say, “We are going to take this away from the world” — but if that thing were not there it would be another world, it would not be the world as it is. These are vain speculations, useless, you understand. Things are like that. We must start from what is and go elsewhere. But we can’t say, “What exists... if it were otherwise...” What’s the good? It is like that.

All that you can say is, “Since the hostile forces are there, what is the best way of using them, of making use of their presence?” That’s a question with some sense. But if you tell me, “If they were not there?” Excuse me, they are there! It is beside the point, you see, they *are* there. We must take them as they are. Therefore, all that you can do is to say, “I would like them not to be there.” This indeed is quite justified. But one must work in order to make them useless. Then they will no longer be there. When they become useless, they will disappear from the world.

We must take things as they are at present and go forward to something else which, we hope, will be better than what is. That’s all that one can do.

Sweet Mother, here it is written: “The method of the Divine Manifestation is through calm and harmony, not through a catastrophic upheaval.”

Yes. So? You don’t know that? You ought to know it.

Some people always imagine that catastrophes are the result of the divine Will. There are others — as soon as they receive a force, they are terribly upset; and then they tell you, “Ah, when the Divine acts He upsets one completely.” It is absolutely wrong. It is not the Divine who upsets you, it is your own imperfection or else it may be just an attack of one of the forces he speaks about — the adverse forces. But if you have no imperfection you cannot be upset. Still, it is certainly not the Divine who upsets you. It is as in what follows this, where it is said: it is not the Mother who is testing you, it is the outer circumstances.

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It isn't very comfortable this way? (*Mother laughs*) You seem to be sorry that it isn't the Divine who causes the upsettings.

The upsetting is always caused by a resistance. If there were no resistance there would be no upsetting. So it can be a resistance which is the cause of cataclysms, earthquakes and cyclones, tidal waves, engulfment of continents, volcanic eruptions, etc.

Mother, are the hostile forces conscious of the function assigned to them, that is...

No. He has said in the book that they have assigned it to themselves. He has said in the text: "The hostile forces have a certain self-chosen function," that is, it is they who have decided to do this.

But what do you want to ask? Why have they been given these functions?

No, I asked whether the hostile forces were conscious of the function assigned to them. Because that would mean that the hostile forces help in the spiritual accomplishment.

There is nothing that finally does not help. If they did it deliberately, they would no longer be hostile forces, they would be collaborators. For you must take care of one thing, you must not speak of "hostile forces" when thinking of forces which are hostile to us. These forces are not hostile to human beings, to their quietude or happiness, they are hostile to the divine Work.

And usually I have heard many people speaking of "hostile forces" — for instance, "the hostile forces of illness which attack me". This is too personal a point of view, it may not be the result of hostile forces; you call them hostile because they attack you. But in fact, when one speaks of hostile forces it means forces hostile to the divine Work or the divine Will. So, if they

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collaborated with this Work, they would no longer be hostile, you see. That's quite peremptorily logical.

Therefore, one can't say that it is any kind of work for the progress of humanity or even for the progress of the universe. But there is nothing, not even the most hostile things, which can't be used for the divine Work. It depends on how it is taken. But it must be said that in their relation with human beings they take a very wicked pleasure in testing them. For example, if you are not extremely strong and extremely sincere, and you tell yourself, "Oh, I am sure of my faith" — this for instance among many other things — immediately something happens which is going to try to shake your faith completely. This is one... I suppose that's their diversion, their amusement.

How many times, you know, when someone boasts... it may be very childish... but when someone boasts about something: "Oh, I am sure of that, I shall never make that mistake", immediately I see a hostile formation passing there, like that, and it enters by the little hole made by the boasting. It enters within, like that, and then penetrates, and so prepares everything for you to do exactly what you didn't want to. But this is an amusement, it is certainly not to help you to progress. (*Mother laughs*) But if you know how to take it, it does help you to progress. You say, "Good, another time I won't boast."

And as these forces are very conscious on the mental and vital plane, one doesn't even need to pronounce the words. If the thought... for example, if you have worked well to correct something, either a bad habit or a material weakness, anything, you have worked hard to correct this thing, and as you have worked well you have succeeded to a certain extent. Then, if simply mentally you state that you have succeeded, the next minute it begins again. It is... you see, you must not even think, it is not a question of saying, the question is simply of thinking: "Why, it was like that before, and now it is like this. Ah, it is fine!" Finished. The next minute it begins again.

And this is certain, because there are witnesses all around

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you who are notoriously malicious, and this amuses them terrifically. Sometimes I actually even hear them laughing when someone says something frankly. I hear a little laugh like that. Oh, it amuses them very much. And the next minute or the next day, crash! It is undone.

How can we get rid of these witnesses?

Ah! From the practical point of view, you must be in a state of inner silence, with a mental activity exclusively occupied with forming the thing you want to do, the progress you want to accomplish, that is to say, the mental construction you need for your work. And your capacity for observation — it is infinitely preferable, I could say absolutely indispensable, to use it to observe your field of action, the processes you employ for your action, the results obtained, the principle you can arrive at from the experience, the knowledge you can obtain, indeed, all these things... but not to turn back on yourself and look at yourself acting. It is this movement of making oneself the object of observation which is dangerous. And this always causes unpleasantness, sometimes a very serious one. Well, most people pass their time looking at themselves, at what they are doing, how they are living, and this makes them very... what is called in English self-conscious, that is, instead of sincerely being in what they are doing and exclusively in what they are doing, they look at themselves acting and appreciate or belittle themselves, according to their particular nature. Some people look at themselves acting with great complacency and an extreme satisfaction and consider themselves truly very remarkable. Others, on the contrary, have the critical mind and pass their time criticising themselves all the while. Well, neither is better than the other. They are equally bad. The best thing is not to be occupied with oneself. If one has a work to do, the best is to see to that work and naturally the best way of doing it. This of course is always good. But not to — whether one does it well or not — to look at

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oneself doing it and appreciate oneself; that is useless.

To discover how to do the work and what is the best way of doing it is very useful. But to look at oneself doing it and admire or belittle oneself, that's not only useless but disastrous.

Mother, what does "a well-developed psychic being" mean exactly?

Oh, what does it mean: a well-developed psychic being? But I have explained this to you at full length. Wasn't it last week or was it the week before? Why, yes, I said how psychic beings develop slowly from the first divine spark to the formation of a completely constituted being, absolutely conscious and independent. So when we speak of a well-developed being, a well-developed psychic, we speak of a psychic being that has nearly reached the maximum point of its formation.

Then, after having developed, how can it have any imperfections?

What imperfections?

As you said the other day, didn't you, if someone has difficulties it means a mediocre being.

But excuse me! Don't mix up the psychic being with the outer being. The psychic being may be perfect and the outer being may be idiotic. Don't confuse the two. They have nothing to do... unfortunately they have nothing to do with each other, most of the time. For the outer being is not at all conscious of the psychic being; but to the extent that it is conscious it reflects the perfection of this psychic.

If you want to speak of the circumstances, not of the character, why would a psychic being not have difficulties in the world? If the world were entirely psychic, I would understand. But it

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isn't. It is just the very opposite, and I think the more psychic one is, usually, the more difficulties he has. Only, one is armed to face the difficulties. But the more psychic one is, the more is he in contradiction with the present state of the world. So when one is in opposition with something, the result is difficulties. And I have noticed that most often those who have many difficulties are those who are in a more or less close contact with their psychic being. If you want to speak about outer circumstances — I am not speaking of the character, that's quite different, but of outer circumstances — the people who have to struggle most and would have most reason to suffer are those who have a very developed psychic being.

First, the development of the psychic being has a double result which is concomitant. That is, with the development of the psychic being, the sensitivity of the being grows. And with the growth of sensitivity there is also the growth of the capacity for suffering; but there is the counterpart, that is, to the extent to which one is in relation with the psychic being, one faces the circumstances of life in an altogether different way and with a kind of inner freedom which makes one capable of withdrawing from a circumstance and not feeling the shock in the ordinary way. You can face the difficulty or outer things with calm, peace, and a sufficient inner knowledge not to be troubled. So, on one side you are more sensitive and on the other you have more strength to deal with the sensitivity.

No urgent question?

What is an urgent question? Who can tell me?

A question whose answer is urgent.

Ah, I would have said that it is a question... if one didn't ask it today he couldn't sleep tonight. (*Laughter*)

That indeed is the only question that's truly urgent. There we are. So there isn't any, is there? You are all going to sleep very well! (*Laughter*)

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It can be a question... if one didn't ask it one couldn't make any progress today.

Yes, that's true. But are you conscious of the question which will make you progress? If you are already conscious of this, it is surely something. It is half the progress made already. Are there any questions like that? Someone ripe for progress? Good, then it will be for next time.

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

Sweet Mother, who is this “Master of forces” who sees “the defects of the present machinery”?

It is the divine Presence which sees from within what is incomplete and imperfect in the working of the present being. The divine Consciousness is present in the psychic being and it sees what is imperfect and at the same time it is aware of the attacks, and it knows what should be done to repulse them. But for this, one must be conscious of his psychic being. It is always the same thing. We always come back to the same thing.

Why does one suffer when one commits suicide?

Why does one commit suicide? Because one is a coward.... When one is cowardly one always suffers.

In the next life one suffers again?

The psychic being comes with a definite purpose to go through a set of experiences and to learn and make progress. Then if you leave before its work is finished it will have to come back to do it again under much more difficult conditions. So all that you have avoided in one life you will find again in another, and more difficult. And even without leaving in this way, if you have difficulties to overcome in life, you have what we usually call a test to pass, you see; well, if you don't pass it or turn your back upon it, if you go away instead of passing it, you will have to pass it another time and it will be much more difficult than before.

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Now people, you know, are extremely ignorant and they think that it is like this: there is life, and then death; life is a bunch of troubles, and then death is an eternal peace. But it is not at all like that. And usually when one goes out of life in an altogether arbitrary way and in an ignorant and obscure passion, one goes straight into a vital world made of all these passions and all this ignorance. So the troubles one wanted to avoid one finds again without even having the protection which the body gives, for — if you have ever had a nightmare, that is, a rash excursion in the vital world, well, your remedy is to wake yourself up, that is to say, to rush back immediately into your body. But when you have destroyed your body you no longer have a body to protect you. So you find yourself in a perpetual nightmare, which is not very pleasant. For, to avoid the nightmare you must be in a psychic consciousness, and when you are in a psychic consciousness you may be quite sure that things won't trouble you. It is indeed the movement of an ignorant darkness and, as I said, a great cowardice in front of the sustained effort to be made.

Sweet Mother, why is it that all this happens only on Wednesdays¹ — either the rain or noises or...

Well, perhaps it is something which does not like our lessons. But still, today it is because it's the 26th of January;² it has fallen on this day.

Sweet Mother, why do men take pleasure in making a lot of noise?

In making a noise? Because they like to deaden themselves. In silence they have to face their own difficulties, they are in front

¹ Mother's classes, in which these talks were given, were held on Wednesdays.

² Often, during the talk, loud music and noises blared from the loudspeakers in the town. The 26th of January is the Republic Day of India.

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of themselves, and usually they don't like that. In the noise they forget everything, they become stupefied. So they are happy.

Constantly man rushes into external action in order not to have time to observe himself and how he lives. For him this is expressed by the desire to escape from boredom. Indeed, for some people it is much more tiresome to remain quiet — seated, or to be still. So for them it represents an escape from boredom: to make a lot of noise, to commit many stupidities, and become terribly restless; it is their way of escaping boredom. And when they sit quietly and look at themselves, they are bored. Perhaps because they are boring. That's very likely. The more boring one is, the more one is bored. Very interesting people usually are not bored.

Mother, if one is cowardly and avoids a difficulty, if next time the difficulty is still greater, then how long does this continue?

It continues until one stops being cowardly, till one understands that it's not something to be done. One can overcome one's cowardice. There isn't a thing one can't overcome if one wants to.

One is cowardly because of ignorance?

One is cowardly because of what?

Ignorance.

That means one can consider ignorance the cause of all bad things. But I think that one is cowardly because one is very tamasic and fears having to make an effort. In order not to be cowardly, one must make an effort, begin by an effort, and afterwards it becomes very interesting. But the best thing is to make the effort to overcome this kind of flight out of oneself.

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Instead of facing the thing, one recoils, runs away, turns one's back and runs away. For the initial effort is difficult. And so, what prevents you from making an effort is the inert, ignorant nature.

As soon as you enter the rajasic nature, you like effort. And at least the one advantage of rajasic people is that they are courageous, whereas tamasic people are cowards. It is the fear of effort which makes one cowardly. For once you have started, once you have taken the decision and begun the effort, you are interested. It is exactly the same thing which is the cause of some not liking to learn their lessons, not wanting to listen to the teacher; it is tamasic, it is to be asleep, it avoids the effort which must be made in order to catch the thing and then grasp it and keep it. It is half-somnolence. So it is the same thing physically, it is a somnolence of the being, an inertia.

There are people who... I have known people who were physically very courageous, and were very, very cowardly morally, because men are made of different parts. Their physical being can be active and courageous and their moral being cowardly. I have known the opposite also: I have known people who were inwardly very courageous and externally they were terrible cowards. But these have at least the advantage of having an inner will, and even when they tremble they compel themselves.

Once I was asked a question, a psychological question. It was put to me by a man who used to deal in wild animals. He had a menagerie, and he used to buy wild animals everywhere, in all countries where they are caught, in order to sell them again on the European market. He was an Austrian, I think. He had come to Paris, and he said to me, "I have to deal with two kinds of tamers. I would like to know very much which of the two is more courageous. There are those who love animals very much, they love them so much that they enter the cage without the least idea that it could prove dangerous, as a friend enters a friend's house, and they make them work, teach them how to do things, make them work without the slightest fear. I knew some who

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did not even have a whip in their hands; they went in and spoke with such friendliness to their animals that all went off well. This did not prevent their being eaten up one day. But still — this is one kind. The other sort are those who are so afraid before entering, that they tremble, you know, they become sick from that, usually. But they make an effort, they make a considerable moral effort, and without showing any fear they enter and make the animals work.”

Then he told me, “I have heard two opinions: some say that it is much more courageous to overcome fear than not to have any fear.... Here’s the problem. So which of the two is truly courageous?”

There is perhaps a third kind, which is truly courageous, still more courageous than either of the two. It is the one who is perfectly aware of the danger, who knows very well that one can’t trust these animals. The day they are in a particularly excited state they can very well jump on you treacherously. But that’s all the same to them. They go there for the joy of the work to be done, without questioning whether there will be an accident or not and in full quietude of mind, with all the necessary force and required consciousness in the body. This indeed was the case of that man himself. He had so terrific a will that without a whip, simply by the persistence of his will, he made them do all that he wanted. But he knew very well that it was a dangerous profession. He had no illusions about it. He told me that he had learnt this work with a cat — a cat!

He was a man who, apart from his work as a trader in wild animals, was an artist. He loved to draw, loved painting, and he had a cat in his studio. And it was in this way that he began becoming interested in animals. This cat was an extremely independent one, and had no sense of obedience. Well, he wanted to make a portrait of his cat. He put it on a chair and went to sit down at his easel. Frrr... the cat ran away. So he went to look for it, took it back, put it back on the chair without even raising his voice, without scolding it, without saying anything

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to it, without hurting it of course or striking it. He took it up and put it back on the chair. Now, the cat became more and more clever. In the studio in some nooks there were canvasses, canvasses on which one paints, which were hidden and piled on one another, behind, in the corners. So the cat went and sat there behind them. It knew that its master would take some time to bring out all those canvasses and catch it; the man, quietly, took them out one by one, caught the cat and put it back in its place.

He told me that once from sunrise to sunset he did this without stopping. He did not eat, the cat did not eat (*laughter*), he did that the whole day through; at the end of the day it was conquered. When its master put it on the chair it remained there (*laughter*) and from that time onwards it never again tried to run away. Then he told himself, "Why not try the same thing with the bigger animals?" He tried and succeeded.

Of course he couldn't take a lion in this way and put it on a chair, no, but he wanted to get them to make movements — silly ones, indeed, such as are made in circuses: putting their forefeet on a stool, or sitting down with all four paws together on a very small place, all kinds of stupid things, but still that's the fashion, that's what one likes to show; or perhaps to stand up like a dog on the hind legs; or even to roar — when a finger is held up before it, it begins to roar — you see, things like that, altogether stupid. It would be much better to let the animals go round freely, that would be much more interesting. However, as I said, that's the fashion.

But he managed this without any whipping, he never had a pistol in his pocket, and he went in there completely conscious that one day when they were not satisfied they could give him the decisive blow. But he did it quietly and with the same patience as with the cat. And when he delivered his animals — he gave his animals to the circuses, you see, to the tamers — they were wonderful.

Of course, those animals — all animals — feel it if one is afraid, even if one doesn't show it. They feel it extraordinarily,

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with an instinct which human beings don't have. They feel that you are afraid, your body produces a vibration which arouses an extremely unpleasant sensation in them. If they are strong animals this makes them furious; if they are weak animals, this gives them a panic. But if you have no fear at all, you see, if you go with an absolute trustfulness, a great trust, if you go in a friendly way to them, you will see that they have no fear; they are not afraid, they do not fear you and don't detest you; also, they are very trusting.

It is not to encourage you to enter the cages of all the lions you go to see, but still it is like that. When you meet a barking dog, if you are afraid, it will bite you, if you aren't, it will go away. But you must really not be afraid, not only appear unafraid, because it is not the appearance but the vibration that counts.

You have had enough of this noise, haven't you?

Sweet Mother, you didn't say who is the most courageous?

I said it is a third kind who is the most courageous. Courage... it is courage in different places. The one who is friendly with animals, who has no fear — this is because there is a great physical affinity between them, an intimacy for all kinds of reasons, you see, a spontaneous physical friendship. But we don't know, if he suddenly awoke to a sense of danger whether he would keep up his courage. It is possible that he might lose it immediately.

On the other hand, the second one has no affinity with animals, and so he fears them. But within himself he has much courage and goodwill, a will and mental courage and perhaps a vital one, which make him master his bodily fear and act as though he were not afraid. But the fear is there in the body. Only he has controlled it. Now it is to be seen whether physical courage or moral courage is greater. One is not greater than the other; it is courage in different domains.

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Some people move without a quiver in the midst of all dangers. They have physical courage.

Others... you see, during the wars a phenomenon occurred, we have all the study-cases possible. When the soldiers were in the trenches and were told to come out of their trench and go and occupy another, and they came out from the trench under enemy fire which was right in front of them... then naturally if you value your life in the least, you cannot but be afraid — if you set store by your life; or of course, there are some who could be fearless, but then they would be yogis. Usually soldiers are not yogis, they are ordinary people, because everyone becomes a soldier. In the olden days, a very long time ago, it was those who loved battle who became soldiers. But it is no longer so. It is all the most peaceful poor devils who are taken and turned into soldiers, and everyone has to go in for it. So there isn't one in a thousand who truly has the soldier's temperament — surely not. The great majority are people made for the ordinary life in the ordinary way, those who like quietness, you see, to have their little hum-drum routine of life. They don't feel they are warriors at all. Therefore, it is difficult to expect them to become heroes overnight. However, as the officers have a pistol in their hands, and if not obeyed shoot one in the back, it is thought better to march on, you understand, than to be killed like a rat. There, the situation is like that. It is not very poetic but it is like that. Well, some people, you see, fell literally ill with all this when they had to get out — ill, I can say, they had diarrhoea, they were absolutely ill. They had to get out all the same, and they did, and then sometimes on the way they were seized by a great courage in face of the real danger.

Others went out like a block of wood, without even knowing what was going to happen, completely stupefied by the intensity of the danger. There were some who offered to go out when the order was not given to all, when it was a mission that had to be fulfilled; there were men who offered themselves. But these knew very well what could be awaiting them. And so, here, these

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were courageous people, but there weren't many of them. There never are many.

Only, in the heat of action, when the atmosphere is at its utmost tension, there is a kind of collective suggestion which makes heroes of men for the time being. Afterwards it is finished, but at that moment one is heroic. But this of course is a collective suggestion.

True courage, in its deepest sense, is to be able to face everything, everything in life, from the smallest to the greatest things, from material things to those of the spirit, without a shudder, without physically... without the heart beginning to beat faster, without the nerves trembling or the slightest emotion in any part of the being. Face everything with a constant consciousness of the divine Presence, with a total self-giving to the Divine, and the whole being unified in this will; then one can go forward in life, can face anything whatever. I say, without a shudder, without a vibration; this, you know, is the result of a long effort, unless one is born with a special grace, born like that. But this indeed is still more rare.

To overcome one's fear means that there is one part of the being which is stronger than the other, and which has no fear and imposes its own intrepidity on the part which is afraid. But this doesn't necessarily imply that one is more courageous than the one who has no fear to master. Because the one who doesn't have any fear to master... this means that he is courageous everywhere, in all the parts of his being. Now, there is an intrepidity which comes from unconsciousness and ignorance. Children, for example, who do not know about dangers, you see, do things they would not do if they had the knowledge of this danger. This means that their intrepidity is an ignorant one. But true courage is courage with the full knowledge of the thing, that is, it knows all the possibilities and is ready to face everything without exception.

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

What is the meaning of “you must take the right attitude”?

He has explained this before. The right attitude is the attitude of trust, the attitude of obedience, the attitude of consecration.

“Let nothing and nobody come between you and the Mother’s force...” Who is this person?

This person? Anybody at all. Anybody at all who... There are all kinds of ways of letting someone come between you and the divine force. First of all it is to attach a very great importance to your relation with someone. It is to listen to the advice given to you by someone who is not qualified. It is to want to please anybody at all, for any reason whatever. People do that constantly, don’t they?

Probably what is written here was to someone who had heard certain things and was attaching much importance to these things — advices or remarks or opinions — who was attaching importance to these things. So Sri Aurobindo told him: Let nobody come between you and the Divine.

Whoever it might be, parents, friends, no matter who, it is not any special person... It may even be for each one a special person...

Sweet Mother, I did not understand “Sadhana has to be done in the body.”

The body? This is the continuation of something. It is said that

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some people are disgusted with life and want to leave it in the hope that another time it will be better. So it is said: It is useless to run away from your body, it won't be easier without the body. On the contrary it will be much more difficult. And the body is made for doing yoga. We are upon earth; the period one passes on earth is that in which one can make progress. One does not progress outside terrestrial life. The earthly, material life is essentially the life of progress, it is here that one makes progress. Outside the earthly life one takes rest or is unconscious or one may have periods of assimilation, periods of rest, periods of unconsciousness. But as for the periods of progress, they are on the earth and in the body. So, when you take a body it is to make progress, and when you leave it the period of progress is over.

And true progress is sadhana; that is, it is the most conscious and swiftest progress. Otherwise one makes progress with the rhythm of Nature, which means that it can take centuries and centuries and centuries and millenniums to make the slightest bit of progress. But true progress is that made by sadhana. In yoga one can do in a very short time what takes otherwise an interminable time. But it is always in the body and always upon earth that it is done, not elsewhere. That is why when one is in a body one must take advantage of it and not waste one's time, not say, "A little later, a little later." It is much better to do it immediately. All the years you pass without making any progress are wasted years which you are sure to regret afterwards.

"The difficulty must have come from distrust and disobedience..."

Yes, all these things — they are replies to letters. You see, someone was complaining of a difficulty. And so, having read the letter Sri Aurobindo saw that in this person the difficulty must have come from a lack of trust and obedience. He tells him so. And as it is something that happens very frequently, as it is common enough, you see, it is useful for everybody.

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Mother, why is it that the same contemplation does not always produce the same sensation in oneself? That is, for example, when one looks at the sea or the stars and thinks of one's insignificance, then there is a particular sensation which is produced within, and then at another time, when one wants to have the same experience, even if one thinks about it, why doesn't it recur?

One can never have the same experience twice because one is never the same person twice. Between the first experience and the second, even if one hour has passed, you are no longer the same man and you can never reproduce identically the same thing. If you take care to become more conscious, more sincere, more concentrated, the experience you have will be different, but it may be deeper and more clear. But if you cling to something you have had and want to reproduce the same thing, you will have nothing at all, because you can't have the same thing and you are in a state in which you refuse to have a new experience, for you are attached to the past one. And usually when one has had an experience which was a revelation, something altogether important, one doesn't want to leave it, one is afraid of not having it any longer, and so, in this movement of clinging to something, one prevents oneself from progressing and puts oneself in conditions in which one can't have the next experience.

Well, this has to be understood, because it is an absolute fact: one can never have the same experience twice. There may be similar experiences, very close, and particularly some which appear similar, but these experiences... if one is absolutely sincere, impartial and like a blank page, he will perceive that there is a difference, sometimes an essential one, between the two, though in appearance they seem very close. But the more ready you are to leave behind all that you have experienced, in order to be able to go towards something better and higher, the faster you will go; the more you drag the heavy weight of all the past which you don't want to get rid of, the slower is your advance.

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All the past should always be simply like a stepping-stone or a ladder, something to lead you farther; it should not have any other use except to push you forward. And if you can feel this and always turn your back on what is past and look at what you want to do, then you go much faster, you don't waste time on the way. What makes you lose time is always this clinging to what has been, to what is, what seemed to you beautiful and good in what is past. This must only help you, you must not reject it, but it must help you to go forward, it must simply be something on which you lean to take a step forward.

Now, at a particular time, a set of circumstances, inner and outer, has caused one to be receptive to a certain vibration; for example, as you say, while looking at the stars or contemplating a landscape or reading a page or hearing a lecture, one has suddenly an inner revelation, an experience, something that strikes him and gives him the impression of being open to something new. But if you want to hold on to this tightly like that, you will lose everything, because one can't keep the past, one must always go forward, advance, advance. This illumination must prepare you so that you can organise your whole being on this new level, in order to be able suddenly, one day, to leap up again to a higher step.

There is a horizontal advance between abrupt ascents. It is the moment of the abrupt ascent which gives you an impression of something like a revelation, a great inner joy. But once you have climbed the step, if you want to climb it once more you would have to go down again. You must go on preparing yourself at this level in order to climb another higher step. These things which suddenly give you a great joy are always ascents. But these ascents are prepared by a slow work of horizontal progress, that is, one must become more and more conscious, establish more and more perfectly what one is, draw from it all the inner, psychological consequences, and in action also. It is a long utilisation of an abrupt leap and, as I say, there are two kinds of progress. But the horizontal progress is indispensable.

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You must not stop, you must not cling in this way to your vertical progress and not want to move because it has brought you a revelation. You must know how to leave it in order to prepare for another.

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This talk is based upon *Bases of Yoga*, Chapter 4, “Desire — Food — Sex”.

Sweet Mother, here we have: “The Sun and the Light may be a help, and will be...”?

Obviously it is someone who had written an experience in which he was in contact with a sun and a light, and he wanted to take the support of these as a help in the sadhana. It is the answer to an experience.

Sweet Mother, is desire contagious?

Ah, yes, very contagious, my child. It is even much more contagious than illness. If someone next to you has a desire, immediately it enters you; and in fact it is mainly in this way that it is caught. It passes from one to another... Terribly contagious, in such a powerful way that one is not even aware that it is a contagion. Suddenly one feels something springing up in oneself; someone has gently put it inside. Of course, one could say, “Why aren’t people with desires quarantined?” Then we should have to quarantine everybody. (*Mother laughs*)

Where does desire come from?

The Buddha said that it comes from ignorance. It is more or less that. It is something in the being which fancies that it needs something else in order to be satisfied. And the proof that it is ignorance is that when one has satisfied it, one no longer cares for it, at least ninety-nine and a half times out of a hundred. I believe, right at its origin it is an obscure need for growth,

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as in the lowest forms of life love is changed into the need to swallow, absorb, become joined with another thing. This is the most primitive form of love in the lowest forms of life, it is to take and absorb. Well, the need to take is desire. So perhaps if we went back far enough into the last depths of the inconscience, we could say that the origin of desire is love. It is love in its obscurest and most unconscious form. It is a need to become joined with something, an attraction, a need to take, you see.

Take for instance... you see something which is — which seems to you or is — very beautiful, very harmonious, very pleasant; if you have the true consciousness, you experience this joy of seeing, of being in a conscious contact with something very beautiful, very harmonious, and then that's all. It stops there. You have the joy of it — that such a thing exists, you see. And this is quite common among artists who have a sense of beauty. For example, an artist may see a beautiful creature and have the joy of observing the beauty, grace, harmony of movement and all that, and that's all. It stops there. He is perfectly happy, perfectly satisfied, because he has seen something beautiful. An ordinary consciousness, altogether ordinary, dull like all ordinary consciousness — as soon as it sees something beautiful, whether it be an object or a person, hop! "I want it!" It is deplorable, you know. And into the bargain it doesn't even have the joy of the beauty, because it has the anguish of desire. It misses that and has nothing in exchange, because there is nothing pleasant in desiring anything. It only puts you in an unpleasant state, that's all.

The Buddha has said that there is a greater joy in overcoming a desire than in satisfying it. It is an experience everybody can have and one that is truly very interesting, very interesting.

There was someone who was invited — it happened in Paris — invited to a first-night (a first-night means a first performance) of an opera of Massenet's. I think... I don't remember now whose it was. The subject was fine, the play was fine, and the music not displeasing; it was the first time and this person was invited

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to the box of the Minister of Fine Arts who always has a box for all the first nights at the government theatres. This Minister of Fine Arts was a simple person, an old countryside man, who had not lived much in Paris, who was quite new in his ministry and took a truly childlike joy in seeing new things. Yet he was a polite man and as he had invited a lady he gave her the front seat and himself sat at the back. But he felt very unhappy because he could not see everything. He leaned forward like this, trying to see something without showing it too much. Now, the lady who was in front noticed this. She too was very interested and was finding it very fine, and it was not that she did not like it, she liked it very much and was enjoying the show; but she saw how very unhappy that poor minister looked, not being able to see. So quite casually, you see, she pushed back her chair, went back a little, as though she was thinking of something else, and drew back so well that he came forward and could now see the whole scene. Well, this person, when she drew back and gave up all desire to see the show, was filled with a sense of inner joy, a liberation from all attachment to things and a kind of peace, content to have done something for somebody instead of having satisfied herself, to the extent that the evening brought her infinitely greater pleasure than if she had listened to the opera. This is a true experience, it is not a little story read in a book, and it was precisely at the time this person was studying Buddhist discipline, and it was in conformity with the saying of the Buddha that she tried this experiment.

And truly this was so concrete an experience, you know, so real that... ah, two seconds later, you see, the play, the music, the actors, the scene, the pictures and all that were gone like absolutely secondary things, completely unimportant, while this joy of having mastered something in oneself and done something not simply selfish, this joy filled all the being with an incomparable serenity — a delightful experience... Well, it is not just an individual, personal experience. All those who want to try can have it.

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There is a kind of inner communion with the psychic being which takes place when one willingly gives up a desire, and because of this one feels a much greater joy than if he had satisfied his desire. Besides, most usually, almost without exception, when one satisfies a desire it always leaves a kind of bitter taste somewhere.

There is not one satisfied desire which does not give a kind of bitterness; as when one has eaten too sugary a sweet it fills your mouth with bitterness. It is like that. You must try sincerely. Naturally you must not pretend to give up desire and keep it in a corner, because then one becomes very unhappy. You must do it sincerely.

How is the psychic need realised?

(Silence)

I heard you clearly. But it is the meaning of your question which I don't understand.

When one realises in the mind?

Oh, oh, no, not at all. "The psychic need is realised", you mean, "How is it realised? How is it expressed in the outer life?" What do you call "realising"? Not clear? It is not very clear in your thought? "Psychic need" to begin with, what do you call "the psychic need"? The need to know one's psychic being or the need of the psychic to express itself?

The psychic's need to express itself.

It expresses itself by realising itself, expressing itself.

In what way?

You mean whether it needs to go through the mind? Thank God,

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no, because it would be a very difficult operation. The psychic need is an expression of the divine Grace and it is expressed by the divine Grace.

Psychic life in the universe is a work of the divine Grace. Psychic growth is a work of the divine Grace and the ultimate power of the psychic being over the physical-being will also be a result of the divine Grace. And the mind, if it wants to be at all useful, has only to remain very quiet, as quiet as it can, because if it meddles in it, it is sure to spoil everything.

So there will be no need of the mind?

Ah, excuse me, I did not say that one doesn't need the mind. The mind is useful for something else. The mind is an instrument for formation and organisation, and if the mind lets the psychic make use of it, that will be very good. But it is not the mind which will help the psychic to manifest. The roles are reversed. The mind can be an instrument for the manifestation of the psychic later, when it has already taken possession of the outer consciousness. It is rarely so before that. Usually it is a veil and an obstruction. But surely it can't help in the manifestation. It can help in the action if it takes its true place and true movement. And if it becomes completely docile to the psychic inspiration, it can help to organise life, for this is its function, its reason of existence. But first of all the psychic being must have taken possession of the field, must be the master of the house. Then, later, things can be arranged.

There is only one way for the outer being. Let us take the physical being — the physical being, the poor little physical being, the outer being, which knows nothing, can do nothing by itself. Well, for it there is only one way of allowing the psychic being to manifest: with the candid warmth of a child (*Mother speaks very softly*) to aspire, pray, ask, want with all its strength, without reasoning or trying to understand. One can't imagine how great an obstruction reasoning and this effort to

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understand put in the experience. At the moment when you are on the point of reaching a state in which something will happen, some vibration will be changed in the consciousness of the being... you are all tense in an aspiration and have succeeded in fastening your aspiration, and you are standing there awaiting the answer, if this wretched mind begins to stir and to wonder, “What is happening, and what’s going to happen, when is it going to happen, how is it going to happen, and why is it like that, and in what order will things manifest?” it is all over, you may get up and sweep out your room, you are not fit for anything else.

Sweet Mother, can the psychic express itself without the mind, the vital and the physical?

It expresses itself constantly without them. Only, in order that the ordinary human being may perceive it, it has to express itself through them, because the ordinary human being is not in direct contact with the psychic. If it was in direct contact with the psychic it would be psychic in its manifestation — and all would be truly well. But as it is not in contact with the psychic it doesn’t even know what it is, it wonders all bewildered what kind of a being it can be; so to reach this ordinary human consciousness it must use ordinary means, that is, go through the mind, the vital and the physical.

One of them may be skipped but surely not the last, otherwise one is no longer conscious of anything at all. The ordinary human being is conscious only in his physical being, and only in relatively rare moments is he conscious of his mind, just a little more frequently of his vital, but all this is mixed up in his consciousness, so much so that he would be quite unable to say “This movement comes from the mind, this from the vital, this from the physical.” This already asks for a considerable development in order to be able to distinguish within oneself the source of the different movements one has. And it is so mixed

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that even when one tries, at the beginning it is very difficult to classify and separate one thing from another.

It is as when one works with colours, takes three or four or five different colours and puts them in the same water and beats them up together, it makes a grey, indistinct and incomprehensible mixture, you see, and one can't say which is red, which blue, which green, which yellow; it is something dirty, lots of colours mixed. So first of all one must do this little work of separating the red, blue, yellow, green — putting them like this, each in its corner. It is not at all easy.

I have met people who used to think themselves extremely intelligent, by the way, who thought they knew a lot, and when I spoke to them about the different parts of the being they looked at me like this (*gesture*) and asked me, "But what are you speaking about?" They did not understand at all. I am speaking of people who have the reputation of being intelligent. They don't understand at all. For them it is just the consciousness; it is the consciousness — "It is my consciousness" and then there is the neighbour's consciousness; and again there are things which do not have any consciousness. And then I asked them whether animals had a consciousness; so they began to scratch their heads and said, "Perhaps it is we who put our consciousness in the animal when we look at it," like that...

Sweet Mother, when the psychic being will be able to manifest itself perfectly, will it have any need of the mind?

It will not be able to manifest perfectly unless all the parts of the being collaborate. But I don't think that the mind was fashioned with the intention of making it disappear. It is a part of the general structure.

Your body, you see, if it were without a mind it would be quite at a loss. It would perhaps be more like a plant than a

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body. There is nothing that you do from morning to evening in which the mind does not have its action.

But if the psychic guided it?

Well, if the psychic guides the mind, the mind will act in a psychic way. Then it will be a remarkable mind, absolutely harmonious and doing the right thing in the right way.

But the vital — it is the same thing, exactly the same phenomenon for the vital. The vital as it is at present is said to be the cause of all the troubles and all the difficulties, the seat of the desires, passions, impulses, revolts, etc., etc. But if the vital is entirely surrendered to the psychic, it becomes a wonderful instrument, full of enthusiasm, power, force of realisation, impetus, courage.

And then there remains the poor physical... The poor physical being has been accused of all the misdeeds. In the days of old it was always said that it was impossible, one could do nothing with something so inert, so obscure, so little receptive. But if it too was surrendered to the psychic it also would do the right thing in the right way, and then it would have a stability, a quietude, an exactness in its movements which the other parts of the being don't have, a precision in the execution which one can't have without a body. You have only to see when the body is just a little out of order, when it is ill, how many things you can no longer do, even with a strong will, a great concentration of the vital and the mind. Even when one has the precise knowledge of what ought to be done, if the body is out of order one can no longer do it. Even... I mean, even an activity which is not purely physical, as for instance, writing something.

If your brain is a little unwell — fever, cold — it is very difficult to make it work properly. There is lassitude and something vague, a difficulty in catching things with precision; there occur even very strange phenomena, ideas get mixed up before one is able to express them, things enter into conflict and

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contradict each other; instead of joining together and coming in this way (*gesture*); you see, they begin to do this (*gesture*), so then it creates a disorder. So one tries to catch this one and it escapes. One goes to look for that one, hop! It runs away. And all this just because there is fever which has disturbed things a little, or a cold, you know, what is called a cold in the head, which has slightly disturbed the functioning. If you rise above it, you are absolutely lucid, you are fully conscious, have complete lucidity. Even if you are extremely ill, it makes no difference. Up there you know everything perfectly, you see everything perfectly, you understand everything perfectly, there is no change.

But if you want to put all that on paper, take pencil and paper and begin to write and formulate it, you will see that a slight disturbance comes in like that, as I said; instead of things being grouped together and directed as it usually happens in one's normal state, they do this or go like that or like that (*gestures*), there is disorder... why, strangely it resembles ultramodern painting. It is like that.

I always think that the artists who do this painting must be doing it in a fit of pretty high fever. Things come up in this way and when you try to put them in some reasonable order, there are always some which escape or hide themselves or run away like that, or come and knock against others, and all this creates an incoherence.

It must be the most favourable condition for painting in the latest style, it must be the very height of fever. Oh, I suspect they produce this by artificial means. God knows what drug they take or what kind of hashish they eat or smoke, in what opium dreams they live — surely. People who smoke opium say they have marvellous visions. It must be something like that. (*Laughter*)

I am speaking to you about this because soon perhaps you will be shown a collection of coloured photographs which we have received from a photographer in... I think it's California.

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Los Angeles is in California, isn't it? (*Mother asks Pavitra*) I still know my geography!

Well, you see, it is absolutely ultra-modern painting. It is photography. There is no painting there, it is photography. They are negatives printed on photographic paper in colour. The colour is admirable. I don't know any painter who can produce such beautiful, living warm colours, so marvellously beautiful. But the composition is ultra-modern. What is most... oh, let us call it "reasonable" — if I say "reasonable" they immediately think: "Then it must be ugly", but it is true, from a certain point of view it is true, yet — the most reasonable thing which is still not reasonable enough to be ugly, is, I think, the portrait of the photographer-artist; I don't know, he doesn't say that it is his photo but he gives a small name, you see: "So-and-so is concentrating", I think, or something like that: "Someone is concentrating, reflecting, going within", something like that. The titles are very fine, they are also ultra-modern. There is this one: so we see the gentleman a bit tenuous as though seen through a veil, a light veil, but it is still a man's head. We see that it's the photograph of a head, and the head is not distorted. It is completely there, only a little withdrawn in the background, you see; and then right in the foreground there are brilliant lines with tortuous forms, zigzags, intercrossing things, others which sprout up like the beginnings of branches and leaves, with brilliant colours. All this is in the front, because you see he came out of the physical, went into the background and entered within himself — inside himself — that's it, these zigzags, twistings, efflorescences. And the colour is marvellous, exquisite. This is "Mr. So-and-so goes within". It's the thing we can understand best, we poor people who are not ultra-modern. That's what we can understand best. There are others. We wonder why there's the title on the picture. You should ask the author, he would explain it to you. But just imagine, it is beautiful; it doesn't make sense, it has a false feel, but it is beautiful. It is so beautiful that I said we had to have an exhibition, that it gave me the idea

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of making photographs like that... not I, I am no photographer, I know nothing about it, but to have photographs like this made by a photographer; but then unfortunately with an idea at the back. So that will not be at all ultra-modern. But if one could find, you see, how to use these colours for something which I call expressive, it could become wonderful, truly wonderful. That will take a year, perhaps more to be realised. But still, the guilty one is this gentleman with his photography.

It seems that he is famous all over the world — but I understand nothing of all this, you see — and that it means a considerable labour to do something like this. Of course, these are superimpositions of negatives, a negative taken of these superimpositions, and this is still very complicated. I am not trying to explain it to you, I don't understand anything about it, but I am told that it was a lot of work, very difficult, the mastery of an extremely complicated technique and an effect which has never been achieved before. These are coloured photographs as large as this, that's very large for coloured photographs. And there's a red in them... Oh, the most beautiful reds that Nature has been able to produce in flowers or sunsets — this is still more beautiful. But how he has done it I don't know. There is brown, there is green, there is yellow, there are all kinds of things. Some are more pretty, some less pretty, there are mixtures more or less happy; some photographs seem to have been taken with the help of a microscope: infinitely small things which, becoming large, look extraordinary; things like that. And we can see very clearly that there are superimpositions, but there are exceptional colour effects. There we are.

I don't know when they will show this to you — one of these days, unless they have been sent back already, I don't know, I must find out. I know I asked that they should be shown to you. Well, I find this better... oh, my goodness, happily there is no painter here... (*laughter*), better than modern painting. And this is photography. For modern painting has not yet been able to use colours with such transparency and brilliance. Water-colour

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becomes something completely dull beside this. Oil colour is like mud. The stained glass could perhaps do something; but there, you see, it is the sun playing behind which is the great master. But that is more difficult.

Stained glasses — I had thought of making them. You see, what I wanted were visions which I would have liked to give. I tried several times to reproduce visions in painting — it becomes stupid. It becomes stupid because the means of expression is bad. I had thought of stained glass, but you see, stained glass — these are bits of coloured glass and they have to be joined. So they are joined with a small leaden thread; but that's horrible. All these little leaden threads are like that, it is frightful.

But this is quite good, we shall be able to do something.

There we are.

Au revoir, my children.

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This talk is based upon *Bases of Yoga*, Chapter 4, “Desire — Food — Sex”.

Sweet Mother, here it is said that one should have no attachment for material things; then, when you give us something, if we lose it and feel sad, it can be called attachment?

It is better not to lose it. (*Laughter*) But in fact the thing ought to be only... It is not the thing itself to which one must be attached. It is to open oneself to what is within, what I put into the thing I give, this indeed is much more important. And, of course, there can always be an accident but it is certain that if one gives to a thing its inner symbolical or spiritual value, there is much less chance of losing it; it creates a kind of relation because of which there is not much chance of losing it. It remains close to you.

I have the feeling, when someone loses something I have given him, that he was just in contact with the outer form, the shell, and not with what I had put inside, otherwise he would not have lost it; I have the feeling that there is a lack of deeper perception. Perhaps one was very attached to the outer form, but not very open to what was behind.

Mother, here it is said that specially for an athlete certain foods are necessary, so that there may be certain vitamins which are necessary, and all this...

That's modern science. Yes... well, if you wait some fifty years, they will have found something else, and it will change, and vitamins will be forgotten... But now, what did you want to ask?

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You have given the answer. (Laughter) How should we use things?

Ah, this is... First, to use things with an understanding of their true utility, the knowledge of their real use, with the utmost care so that they do not get spoilt and with the least confusion.

I am going to give you an example: you have a pair of scissors. There are scissors of all kinds, there are scissors for cutting paper, and there are scissors for cutting thread... Now if you have the pair of scissors which you need, use it for the thing it is made for. But I know people who, when they have a pair of scissors, use it without any discernment to cut anything at all, to cut small silk threads, and they try to cut a wire also with it or else they use it as a tool to open tins, you see; for anything whatever, where they need an instrument they get hold of their scissors and use them. So naturally, after quite a short while they come to me again and say, "Oh, my pair of scissors is spoilt, I would like to have another." And they are very much surprised when I tell them, "No, you won't have another, because you have spoilt this one, because you have used it badly." This is just one example. I could give many others.

People use something which gets dirty and is spoilt in becoming dirty, or they forget to clean it or neglect it, because all this takes time.

There is a kind of respect for the object one has, which must make one treat it with much consideration and try to preserve it as long as possible, not because one is attached to it and desires it, but because an object is something respectable which has sometimes cost a lot of effort and labour in the producing and so must as a result be considered with the respect due to the work and effort put into it.

There are people who have nothing, who don't even have the things which are absolutely indispensable, and who are compelled to make them in some way for their personal use. I have seen people of this kind who, with much effort and

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ingenuity had managed to make for themselves certain things which are more or less indispensable from the practical point of view. But the way they treated them, because they were aware of the effort they had put in to make them, was remarkable — the care, that kind of respect for the object they had produced, because they knew how much labour it had cost them. But people who have plenty of money in their pockets, and when they need something turn the knob of a shop-door, enter and put down the money and take the thing, they treat it like that. They harm themselves and give a very bad example.

Many a time I say, “No, use what you have. Try to make the best possible use of it. Don’t throw away things uselessly, don’t ask uselessly. Try to do with what you have, putting into it all the care, all the order, all the necessary method, and avoiding confusion.”

Here, you know, we have a small chit-pad¹, and people write every month what they want; and then it happens that we were compelled to ration things because otherwise it was becoming something excessive. But this rationing often turned against its purpose.

I remember visiting a sadhak in his room, it is now some twenty-five years ago or so. It is an old story. I remember it still. There was a rack hanging from the wall, a rack with five shelves; the rack was as big as this, and there were five shelves one above another and they were all... all these shelves were full, over-full of tiny soap pieces. So I asked him, “But for heaven’s sake, what are you doing with all these pieces of soap? Why do you have all these pieces of soap there? Why don’t you use them?” He said to me, “Ah, we have the right to one cake of soap per month, so every month I ask for soap. It happens that I don’t finish it in that month, I keep the pieces.”

¹ The Ashramites take from what Mother called “Prosperity” their clothes, toilet articles, and other requirements. They write out their needs on a page of their Prosperity Book and give in the list a few days before the distribution, which takes place on the first of each month.

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And he continued to take it?

It was like that, he made a collection; because he had the right to a cake of soap, he wanted to take the soap, and to take the soap he put the former piece aside. It is an authentic story. I am not inventing it.

Many people here are like that. I won't tell you their names but I know them well. There are many like that. They have a right to something, they will ask for it even if they don't need it, because they have the right. This indeed is... well, in fact it is... an attitude... we won't qualify it.

There is also the miser who fills his chest with pieces of gold and never uses them. Gold does not rot, otherwise truly it rots morally, because something that does not circulate becomes very ill. Now, no conclusions!

Sweet Mother, which things are truly indispensable for our life?

I don't think they are the same for everyone. It depends on the country, it depends on the habits, and to tell you the truth, if one analyses very closely, I don't think there are many. You see, if you travel round the world, in every country people have different habits of sleeping, habits of eating, habits of dressing, habits for making their toilet. And quite naturally, they will tell you that the things they use are indispensable. But if you change countries you will realise that all these things are of no use for those people, because they make use of other things which are just as useful for them and seem to them indispensable. Then once again you change the country, and yet again it is other things. So finally, if anyone has travelled a little over the world, he says, "But what is really useful?" I consider a tooth-brush as something indispensable. My neighbour will look at me and tell me, "What's that, your tooth-brush? I use my fingers and it is absolutely all right." And everything's like that, isn't it?

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Food — it seems to you that a certain amount of things is indispensable in order to give you the necessary strength and that they are such and such things because you are accustomed to them, but in another country it is altogether different.

So one can't make a rule; and if one wants to be absolutely strict, I think it is a purely personal question, that it depends on each one's body; because as soon as you grow wide in your consciousness, you realise that the things which seem indispensable to you are not at all so, that you can very well do without them, carry on very well, work very well, have a lot of energy without having any of the things which seem to you indispensable. Are there any things in the whole world which are indispensable, I mean material things? Yes, one can say a small amount of food — and one can't make a general rule, it depends on the climate.

Nature is foreseeing enough, she produces in each climate the right thing for it. Of course, one should not put man at the centre and say that Nature has made this for the good of man, I don't think it is like that, because she had invented all this long before man appeared on the earth. But it is a kind of harmony which develops between the climatic conditions of a country and its produce, as we know that there is a harmony between the size of animals and the largeness of the country they live in. For example, the elephants of India are much smaller than those of Africa. And it is said that this is because in Africa the spaces are immense, so the animals are very big.

It is a kind of harmony established in the creation and as the countries become smaller, as the zones in which these animals live grow smaller, well, the animal becomes smaller until it disappears completely when there is no proper relation left between the free space and its own size. If you construct many houses, well, there will no longer be any bears, any wolves; naturally, first the lions and tigers disappear, but in this I believe men have done something... Fear makes them very destructive. But the greater the masses of human beings and the lesser the

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free spaces, the more do the animal species grow smaller. So how can we make rules?

The more money we have, the more we need...

The more money one has the more one is in a state of calamity, my child. Yes, it is a calamity.

It is a catastrophe to have money. It makes you stupid, it makes you miserly, it makes you wicked. It is one of the greatest calamities in the world. Money is something one ought not to have until one no longer has desires. When one no longer has any desires, any attachments, when one has a consciousness vast as the earth, then one may have as much money as there is on the earth; it would be very good for everyone. But if one is not like that, all the money one has is like a curse upon him. This I could tell anyone at all to his face, even to the man who thinks that it is a merit to have become rich. It is a calamity and perhaps it is a disgrace, that is, it is an expression of a divine displeasure.

It is infinitely more difficult to be good, to be wise, to be intelligent and generous, to be more generous, you follow me, when one is rich than when one is poor. I have known many people in many countries, and the most generous people I have ever met in all the countries, were the poorest. And as soon as the pockets are full, one is caught by a kind of illness, which is a sordid attachment to money. I assure you it is a curse.

So the first thing to do when one has money is to give it. But as it is said that it should not be given without discernment, don't go and give it like those who practise philanthropy, because that fills them with a sense of their own goodness, their generosity and their own importance. You must act in a sattwic way, that is, make the best possible use of it. And so, each one must find in his highest consciousness what the best possible use of the money he has can be. And truly money has no value unless it circulates. For each and every one, money is valuable only when one has spent it. If one doesn't spend it... I tell you, men take

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care to choose things which do not deteriorate, that is, gold — which does not decompose. Otherwise, from the moral point of view it rots. And now that gold has been replaced by paper, if you keep paper for a long time without taking care of it, you will see when you open your drawer that there are small silver-fish which have regaled themselves on your paper-rupees. So they will have left a lace-work which the bank will refuse.

There are countries and religions which always say that God makes those whom He loves poor. I don't know if that is true; but there is one thing which is true, that surely when someone is born rich or has become very rich, in any case when he possesses much from the point of view of material riches, it is certainly not a sign that the Divine has chosen him for His divine Grace, and he must make honourable amends if he wants to walk on the path, the true path, to the Divine.

Wealth is a force — I have already told you this once — a force of Nature; and it should be a means of circulation, a power in movement, as flowing water is a power in movement. It is something which can serve to produce, to organise. It is a convenient means, because in fact it is only a means of making things circulate fully and freely.

This force should be in the hands of those who know how to make the best possible use of it, that is, as I said at the beginning, people who have abolished in themselves or in some way or other got rid of every personal desire and every attachment. To this should be added a vision vast enough to understand the needs of the earth, a knowledge complete enough to know how to organise all these needs and use this force by these means.

If, besides this, these beings have a higher spiritual knowledge, then they can utilise this force to construct gradually upon the earth what will be capable of manifesting the divine Power, Force and Grace. And then this power of money, wealth, this financial force, of which I just said that it was like a curse, would become a supreme blessing for the good of all.

For I think that it is the best things which become the worst.

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Perhaps the worst also can become the best. Some people also say that it is the worst men who become the best. I hope the best don't become the worst, for that indeed would be sad.

But still, certainly, the greatest power, if badly used, can be a very great calamity; whereas this same very great power if well utilised can be a blessing. All depends on the use that's made of things. Each thing in the world has its place, its work, a real use; and if used for something else it creates a disorder, confusion, chaos. And that's because in the world as it is, very few things are utilised for their true work, very few things are really in their place, and it is because the world is in a frightful chaos that there is all this misery and suffering. If each thing was in its place, in a harmonious balance, the whole world could progress without needing to be in the state of misery and suffering in which it is. There!

So there is nothing that's bad in itself, but there are many things — almost all — which are not in their place.

Perhaps in the body also it is like that. There is nothing that's bad in itself; but many things are not in their place, and that is why one becomes ill. There is created an inner disharmony. So the result is that one is ill. And people always think that it is not their fault that they are ill, and it is always their fault, and they are very angry when they are told this. "You have no pity." And yet it is true.

There we are. That's enough, isn't it?

That's all. Then we stop. The dose is complete.

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This talk is based upon *Bases of Yoga*, Chapter 4, “Desire — Food — Sex”.

Sweet Mother, from the beginning man ate because he needed food in order to live. Then why did taste for food develop? One eats what one likes to, and doesn't eat what one doesn't like!

I think primitive man was very close to the animal and lived more by instinct than by intelligence, you see. He ate when he was hungry, without any rule of any kind. Perhaps he had his tastes and preferences too, we know nothing much about it, but he lived much more materially, much less mentally and vitally than now.

Surely primitive man was very material, very near the animal. And as the centuries pass, man becomes more mental and more vital; and as he becomes more vital and mental, naturally refinement is possible, intelligence grows, but also the possibility of perversion and distortion. You see, there is a difference between educating one's senses to the point of being able to bring in all kinds of refinements, developments, knowledge, all the possibilities of appreciation, taste, and all that — there is a difference between this, which is truly a development and progress of consciousness, and attachment or greediness.

One can, for example, very well make a very deep study of taste and have a very detailed knowledge of the different tastes of things, of the association between ideas and taste, in order to acquire a full development — not positively vital, but a development of the senses. There is a great difference between this and those who eat through greediness, who think all the time about food. You see, for them eating is the most important

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thing; all their thoughts are concentrated on it, and they eat not because they need to eat but through desire and greed and gluttony.

In fact people who work in order to develop their taste, to refine it, are rarely very much attached to food. It is not through attachment to food that they do it. It is for the cultivation of their senses, which is a very different thing. It is like the artist, you know, who trains his eyes to appreciate forms and colours, lines, the composition of things, the harmony found in physical nature; it is not at all through desire that he does this, it is through taste, culture, the development of the sense of sight and the appreciation of beauty. And usually artists who are real artists and love their art and live in the sense of beauty, seeking beauty, are people who don't have many desires. They live in the sense of a growth not only visual, but of the appreciation of beauty. There is a great difference between this and people who live by their impulses and desires. That's altogether something else.

Usually all education, all culture, all refinement of the senses and the being is one of the best ways of curing instincts, desires, passions. To eliminate these things does not cure them; to cultivate, intellectualise, refine them, this is the surest means of curing. To give the greatest possible development for progress and growth, to acquire a certain sense of harmony and exactness of perception, this is a part of the culture of the being, of the education of the being. It is like the people who cultivate their intelligence, who learn, read, think, compare, study. These people's minds widen and they are much vaster and more understanding than those who live without mental education, with a few petty ideas which sometimes are even contradictory in their consciousness and govern them totally because these are the only ones they have and they think these are unique ideas which should guide their life; these people are altogether narrow and limited whereas those who are trained and have studied — this at least widens their minds and they can see, compare ideas and see that all possible ideas are there in the world and that it

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is a pettiness, an absurdity to be attached to a limited number of ideas and consider them the exclusive expression of truth.

Education is certainly one of the best means of preparing the consciousness for a higher development. There are people with very crude and very simple natures, who can have great aspiration and attain a certain spiritual development, but the base will always be of an inferior quality, and as soon as they return to their ordinary consciousness they will find obstacles in it, because the stuff is too thin, there are not enough elements in their vital and material consciousness to enable them to bear the descent of a higher force.

To eat through greediness and a passion for food is something completely different from studying the different tastes and knowing how to compare them, combine them and appreciate them.

Are there any other questions? No?

Sweet Mother, where do tastes come from?

It is one of the senses; it is said that it's the tongue; I don't know. It is the sense of taste, as there is the sense of touch. How does it happen that we feel something with the tips of the fingers? There are nerves there, nerves and consciousness. Taste — it is the nerves and consciousness which are in the tongue and the palate.

But there are other tastes for different things.

Oh, it is the word which is the same... The word is used in a literal sense and then in a figurative sense. He has a taste for something — that's a figurative way of using the word. It does not mean that it is the same thing as the taste of the tongue; or of somebody we say that he has good taste, it means that he knows how to appreciate clearly and judiciously, but it doesn't mean that he tastes with his tongue.

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How does fasting produce a state of receptivity?

It is because usually the vital being is very closely concentrated on the body and when the body is well fed it takes its strength from the food, its energy from the food, and it is one way... it is obviously almost the only way; not the only one, but the most important in the present conditions of life... but it is a very tamasic way of absorbing energy.

If you think about it, you see, it is the vital energy which is in either plants or animals, that is, logically it is of an inferior quality to the vital energy which should be in man, who is a slightly higher being in the gradation of the species. So if you draw from below you draw at the same time the inconscience that is below. It is impossible to eat without absorbing a considerable amount of inconscience; this makes you heavy, coarsens you; and then if you eat much, a large amount of your consciousness is absorbed in digesting and assimilating what you have eaten. So already, if you don't take food, you don't have all this inconscience to assimilate and transform inside you; it sets free the energies. And then, as there is an instinct in the being to recuperate the energies spent, if you don't take them from food, that is, from below, you instinctively make an effort to take them through union with the universal vital forces which are free, and if one knows how to assimilate them one does so directly and then there is no limit.

It is not like your stomach which can digest only a certain amount of food, and therefore you can't take in more than that; and even the food you take liberates only a little bit, a very small quantity of vital energy. And so what can remain with you after all the work of swallowing, digesting, etc.? Not much, you see. But if you learn... and this indeed is a kind of instinct, one learns instinctively to draw towards himself the universal energies which move freely in the universe and are unlimited in quantity... as much of these as you are capable of drawing towards you, you can absorb — so instinctively when there is no support from below which comes from food, you

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make the necessary movement to recuperate the energies from outside, and absorb as much of them as you are capable of doing, and sometimes more. So this puts you in a kind of state of excitement, and if your body is very strong and can bear being without food for a certain length of time, then you keep your balance and can use these energies for all kinds of things, as for example, to progress, to become more conscious and transform your nature. But if your physical body doesn't have much in reserve and grows considerably weak from not eating, then this creates an imbalance between the intensity of the energies you absorb and the capacity of the body to hold them, and then this causes disturbances. You lose your balance, and all the balance of forces is destroyed, and anything at all may happen to you. In any case, you lose much control over yourself and become usually very excited, and you take this excitement for a higher state. But often it is simply an inner imbalance, nothing more. It sharpens the receptivity very much. For example, precisely when one fasts and no longer takes the energies from below, well, if you breathe in the odour of a flower it nourishes you, the perfume nourishes you, it gives you a great deal of energy; but otherwise you do not notice it.

There are certain faculties which get intensified, and so one takes that for a spiritual effect. It has very little to do with the spiritual life except that there are people who eat much, think much about their food, are very deeply absorbed in it, and then when they have eaten well — and as I say, they must digest it, and so all their energies are concentrated on their digestion — these people are dull in mind, and this pulls them down very much towards matter; so if they stop eating and stop thinking about food — because there is one thing, that if one fasts and thinks all the time that he is hungry and would like to eat, then it is ten times worse than eating — and can truly fast because they think of something else and are occupied with something else and are not interested in food — then that can help one to climb to a slightly higher degree of consciousness, to free himself

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from the slavery to material needs. But fasting is above all good for those who believe in it — as everything. When you have the faith that this will make you progress, is going to purify you, it does you good. If you don't believe in it, it doesn't do much, except that it makes you thin.

There was... Maeterlinck — you know the books of Maeterlinck, I think; you must have read *The Blue Bird* and others. He was a very fat man, and as he had a sense of beauty, becoming fat upset him very much. So he had decided to fast once a week; one day in the week he did not eat, and as he was an intelligent man he did not bother about food; he wrote, he worked hard on that day, and that kept him reasonably well and in an elegant form; and from that point of view it was very useful to him.

This is the surest result: if one doesn't eat one grows thin; so if one is too fat and wants to grow thin, it is a good means. But on condition that one doesn't pass the day thinking of food, because then, as soon as one stops his fast, he dashes for it and eats so much that he gets back all that he has lost. In fact, the best thing is not to think about it but to regulate one's life automatically enough not to need to think of eating. You eat at fixed hours, eat reasonably, you don't even need to think of the food when you are taking it; you must eat calmly, that's all, quietly, with concentration, and when you do not eat you must never think about it. You must not eat too much, because then you will have to think about your digestion, and it will be very unpleasant for you and will make you waste much time. You must eat just... you must put an end to all desire, all attraction, all movements of the vital, because when you eat simply because the body needs to eat, the body will tell you absolutely precisely and exactly when it has had enough; you see, when one is not moved by a vital desire or mental ideas, one grasps this with surety. "Now it is enough," says the body, "I don't want any more." So one stops. As soon as one has ideas or else desires in the vital, and there is, for instance, something that you like particularly, because you like it particularly you eat three times too much of it... In fact,

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this may cure you to a certain extent, because if you don't have a very strong stomach, you get indigestion, and then after that you have a disgust for the thing which has given you indigestion. Still, these are rather drastic means. One can make progress without having recourse to such means. The best is not to think about it.

Of course there are people who prepare food for themselves and for others, and who are obliged to think about it, but just a very little. One can prepare food while thinking about more interesting things. But in any case, the less one thinks about it the better; and when one is not concerned with it, either mentally or vitally, the body becomes a very good indicator. When it is hungry it will tell you, when it needs to take in something, it will tell you; when it has finished, when it doesn't need any more, it will tell you; and when it doesn't need food, it doesn't think about it, it thinks of something else. It is only the head which creates all the trouble. In fact it is always the head which creates the trouble, because one doesn't know how to use it. If one knew how to use it, it could also create harmony. But it is something very strange that people always use their imagination for something bad, and it is very very rarely that they use their imagination for the good. Instead of thinking of happy things which would help to keep them in balance and harmony, they always think of all the possible catastrophes, and so naturally they disturb the balance of their being, and into the bargain, if they are unfortunate enough to be afraid, they attract the catastrophes they fear.

There we are. That's all? No questions?

Good night, my children.

2 March 1955

This talk is based upon *Bases of Yoga*, Chapter 4, “Desire — Food — Sex”.

Sweet Mother, what is the right spirit and the right consciousness in which one should take food?

It is the spirit of consecration and...
What is the other one you said?

The right consciousness.

Yes, it is the same thing. It is the consciousness that's turned exclusively to the Divine, and wants the divine realisation and nothing else; and the right spirit is the spirit of consecration to the Divine which wants only the transformation and nothing else, that is, something which does not try to seek its own satisfaction in the fulfilment of the aspiration.

There is always, as soon as there's an aspiration... it may be very sincere and spontaneous but immediately the mind and vital are there, watching like robbers behind the door; and if a force answers they rush upon it for their own satisfaction. So there one must take very, very, very great care, because though the aspiration might be sincere, the call absolutely spontaneous and sincere and very pure, as soon as the answer comes the two brigands are there, trying to take possession of what comes for their own satisfaction. And what comes is very good but they immediately pervert it, they use it for personal ends, for the satisfaction of their desires or ambitions, and they spoil everything. And naturally, not only do they spoil everything but they stop the experience. So unless one takes good care, one is stuck there, and cannot move forward. If some Grace is above you, when

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the Grace sees this it automatically gives you a terrible blow to recall you to the reality, to your senses; it gives you a good knock on the head or in the stomach or the heart or anywhere else so that all of a sudden you say, "Oh, that won't do any more."

No questions?

Mother, what does this mean: "sleep has to be gradually transformed into the yogic repose"?

Ah, yogic repose. It means that instead of an unconscious sleep it is a sleep — if you want to call it sleep — a conscious sleep. The body is in a state of complete repose, with the nerves relaxed, the muscles relaxed; one is completely relaxed and at rest; but the spirit remains conscious, conscious enough to be able to put the vital also at rest, the mind also at rest, and let everything be in a state of peace, quietude, immobility, so that the consciousness may be completely free. Then the consciousness can either rest also, if it thinks it necessary, or work if it thinks that is needed; and in any case it is free to do as it wants, what it wants, and to go to the regions to which it wants to go. But the parts belonging to the present physical being, that is, the mind, vital and physical, are in a complete repose and a kind of immobility, due to which the hours of sleep do not need to be so long. One can cut short the number of hours of sleep very much if one leaves the body in this state of rest. But this asks for much work, and a very conscious work, you see, very conscious and very persistent. It cannot be had immediately, it may require years of discipline. Only, once it is acquired, well, one has mastered sleep and can prevent, well... For example, there are many people who, when they go to sleep, are in a very good state of consciousness, and when they wake up in the morning they are completely dazed and have lost all that they had gained the previous day; and that's because their sleep is unconscious and they go out in the vital or the mind or the subtle physical; they go to undesirable places or else fall into the inconscience and lose in this inconscience all

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they had gained before... It is something very necessary, but it can't be acquired very easily. It is one of the most difficult things to do, but it is very useful; only, one can hardly do it without a very close guidance, because unless one knows how to do it even to the last detail, one risks doing stupid things.

In any case one thing you can do in all security is, before going to sleep, to concentrate, relax all tension in the physical being, try... that is, in the body try so that the body lies like a soft rag on the bed, that it is no longer something with twitchings and cramps; to relax it completely as though it were a kind of thing like a rag. And then, the vital: to calm it, calm it as much as you can, make it as quiet, as peaceful as possible. And then the mind also — the mind, try to keep it like that, without any activity. You must put upon the brain the force of great peace, great quietude, of silence if possible, and not follow ideas actively, not make any effort, nothing, nothing; you must relax all movement there too, but relax it in a kind of silence and quietude as great as possible.

Once you have done all this, you may add either a prayer or an aspiration in accordance with your nature, to ask for the consciousness and peace and to be protected against all the adverse forces throughout the sleep, to be in a concentration of quiet aspiration and in the protection; ask the Grace to watch over your sleep; and then go to sleep. This is to sleep in the best possible conditions. What happens afterwards depends on your inner impulses, but if you do this persistently, night after night, night after night, after some time it will have its effect.

Usually, you see, one lies down on the bed and tries to sleep as quickly as possible, and then, that's all, with a state of total ignorance of how it ought to be done. But what I have just told you, if you do that regularly it will have an effect. In any case, it can very well avoid the attacks which occur at night: one has gone to bed very nicely, one wakes up ill; this is something absolutely disastrous, it means that during the night one has been getting infected somewhere in a state of total inconstance.

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Is it not also necessary to remember one's dreams?

This is not so necessary. It is useful if one wants to have a great control over his sleep. But this also one must know how to do. To remember one's dreams — that's in the morning; what I am telling you is for the evening. In the morning when you get up, you must not be in a hurry. That is, you must not wake up just at the moment when you must get out of bed; you must have some time in hand and must take good care, must make a formation before going to sleep, and take good care when waking up not to make any abrupt movement, because if you make an abrupt movement, automatically the memory of your dreams vanishes. You must remain with the head absolutely motionless on the pillow, without stirring, until you can quietly recall to yourself the consciousness which went out, and recall it as one pulls at something, very gently, without any knocking and without haste, in a state of attention and concentration. And then, as the consciousness comes back to you, the consciousness that went out, if you remain quite motionless, very quiet, and do not begin once again to think of all kinds of things, it will bring back first an impression and then the memory, sometimes a fragmentary memory. But if you remain in that same state of receptive immobility, then it can become more and more a conscious memory. But for this you must have time. If there is the least feeling that you have to hurry, it is finished, you can do nothing at all. You must not even ask yourself, when waking up, "What is the time?" It is absolutely finished. If you do that, everything vanishes.

But, Mother, one goes off to sleep again if one doesn't move! (Laughter)

This means one thing or other: either that one has not slept enough, and so should sleep again or else that one is a little tamasic by nature and likes to be in the inconscience.

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So, that's all, my children? No questions?

Mother, an inner effort is often spoilt by dispersions in outer activities.

When one is outwardly active, how to keep the concentration?... Oh, this should not be very difficult. Truly it should not be very difficult. For me what seems difficult is not to keep a kind of intensity of inner consciousness, to be separated from it; this seems something impossible. Once one catches that within oneself, how can one separate oneself from it, if you have had it once, if it has become a reality for you, this consciousness and this inner union with the psychic, and this consciousness and intensity of aspiration, and this flame which is always lit? Why, whatever one may be doing, this cannot be extinguished, it is always there.

It seems to me that to separate oneself from it, once it is there, you must close a door, you must deliberately close the door, like this, upon it, and say, "I am no longer interested in it." But if one truly has the will to keep the contact, it doesn't seem very difficult to me. It seems to me that one must really have the will to turn one's back upon it for it to go away; otherwise it is there, behind everything, all things, constantly. And if on the contrary one has made it a habit, when saying something, when making a movement, simply a movement or doing anything at all, to refer always to that, in there, not to feel capable of doing something without having that at the back, there, to tell you, "Yes, this way, not that way. That, no, not that, this", then it is difficult to live without it.

Some people, because it troubles them, because it puts a control on their impulses and they want to feel absolutely free and independent (what they call independent), seem deliberately to bang the door, like that, they slam the door violently to stop it. Then naturally, once it is done, it is done; then one becomes something so superficial, so weak, so petty, so ignorant,

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so stupid! How can one bear to be like that? It seems to me that immediately the instinct would be to take a step backwards, open the door hurriedly and put oneself again into contact, saying, “No, no, no, not this state, not this frightful state of ignorance” — in which you don’t even know what you ought to say or ought not to say, what you ought to do or ought not to do, where you should go or should not go, nothing, nothing, you are in an obscure and incoherent immensity. It is a dreadful state. But when the door is open and this thing is behind, it is absolutely comfortable at every minute, as though one were leaning one’s back against a great light, a great consciousness, like this... “Ah, now, here we are, this is what ought to be done, that’s what ought to be said, this is the movement to be made”, etc. So, then one is comfortable, quiet, without anguish, without any problem, without any anxiety. One does what one wants to do; whether people take it more or less well is their affair, but for oneself it is like that.

And note that I am telling you this because I take the greatest care to open your door, inside all of you, and if you have only a little... a small movement of concentration within you, you don’t have to spend those long periods in front of a closed door which does not move, of which you do not have the key, and which you do not know how to open. Sometimes one has to wait stuck to the door for hours or for days or months or sometimes for years, and you do not know what to do.

It is not like that for you, my children.

The door is open, only one must look towards it. One must not turn one’s back to it.

Ah, that’s all?

Sweet Mother, what does the error of the lower vital mean?

You are asking what it is?

All desires, all impulses, all egoistical, obscure, ignorant,

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passionate, violent movements — in fact most of the movements one makes every day. This is the error of the lower vital. It wants to have everything for itself. It wants to be the master of the whole life, to govern everything. And when the mind is an accomplice — which happens ninety-nine and a half times out of a hundred — the mind says, “This indeed is called living one’s life, a right to live one’s life.” It means the right to be an ignorant and stupid animal.

Mother, what is sleep? Is it only the need of the body to rest or is it something else?

Sleep can be a very active means of concentration and inner knowledge. Sleep is the school one has to go through, if one knows how to learn his lesson there, so that the inner being may be independent of the physical form, conscious in itself and master of its own life. There are entire parts of the being which need this immobility and semi-consciousness of the outer being, of the body, in order to be able to live their own life, independently.

Only, people don’t know, they sleep because they sleep, as they eat, as they live — by a kind of instinct, a semi-conscious impulse. They don’t even ask themselves the question. You are asking the question now: Why does one sleep? But there are millions and millions of beings who sleep without ever having asked themselves the question why one sleeps. They sleep because they feel sleepy, they eat because they are hungry, and they do foolish things because their instincts push them, without thinking, without reasoning; but for those who know, sleep is a school, an excellent school for something other than the school of waking hours.

It is another school for another purpose, but it is a school. If one wants to make the maximum progress possible, one must know how to use one’s nights as one uses one’s days; only, usually, people don’t at all know what to do, and they try to remain awake and all that they create is a physical and vital

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imbalance — and sometimes a mental one also — as a result.

The physical and all material physical parts should be absolutely at rest, but a repose which is not a fall into the unconscious — this is one of the conditions. And the vital must be in a repose of silence. Then if you have these three things at rest, the inner being which is rarely in relation with the outer life, because the outer life is too noisy and too unconscious for it to be able to manifest itself, can become aware of itself and awaken, become active and act upon the lower parts, establish a conscious contact. This is the real reason for sleep, apart from the necessity that, in the present conditions of life, activity and rest, rest and activity must alternate.

The body needs rest but there are very few people, as I said, who know how to sleep. They sleep in such conditions that they don't wake up refreshed or are hardly rested at all. But this is an entire science to learn.

On what do our physical reserves depend, Mother?

Physical reserves? You mean the reserve of energy?

Yes.

It depends on the capacity to receive the universal vital force; because in fact, through food also it is these vital forces one receives but one receives them from below. But in order to have reserves you must know how to receive the universal vital forces constantly and to have a kind of balance in the being which prevents you from spending more than you have.

A proportion has to be kept between the receptivity and the expenditure. It is a kind of harmony in the being which must be established. Only, some people have an almost instinctive power of attracting towards them the vital forces or absorbing them — the universal vital forces, I mean — and so they make up their expense as they go along spending. These people can produce

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much more than others. Some of them, in certain conditions like sleep or a kind of repose or relaxation, can accumulate forces and later they exhaust them, so to say, in their activities and they must yet once again charge the battery afterwards — this is already a much less favourable condition.

Some people don't know how to receive the forces at all. These live on the energies concentrated in the body — for there is some concentrated energy in all the cells of the body. They live upon that, but after some time, they are drained out completely if they don't know how to recuperate; when they have spent all the energies which were concentrated inside them either they fall ill or they never recuperate them. So this cannot last very long; it lasts the average lifetime of human beings, and yet, at the end of a certain number of years they are no longer able to make the same effort or to produce as much, or above all to make any progress.

But those who know instinctively or who have learnt to receive and accumulate the universal vital forces, these can last almost indefinitely. The wear and tear is very little, especially if they know how to do it and do it with knowledge and method; then here it can reach a certain degree of perfection.

When one knows, sometimes just two or three minutes are sufficient to recuperate the energies spent over a long period. Only, one must know how to do it.

But those who draw back upon themselves, who turn and double up on themselves, cannot do this. One must live all the time in a very vast and very expansive consciousness (I don't know if you understand the word, it means something which extends very homogeneously and quietly, as when the tide is at its height and the water spreads like that, quietly — that's the impression). The vital must be like that — then one is open to the universal forces. But if, for example, one has the very bad habit of exchanging vital forces with one's fellowmen, then one loses the capacity altogether. So unless one is in relation with someone, one receives nothing at all. But naturally if you receive forces through others, you receive at the same time all the

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difficulties of the other person, perhaps sometimes his qualities also, but these are less contagious. This indeed is something that shuts you up most.

Some people... unless they have more or less social relations with others, relations of friendship, conversing... and then it goes still farther... they don't receive any forces; and this is how they receive them. But this always makes a soup. The forces one receives are already half digested, in any case they don't have their primal purity, and this affects your own capacity.

But when one has this capacity in his own consciousness — for example, you go for a walk and come to a place which is somewhat vast, like the seashore or like a great plain or the summit of a mountain, a place where the horizon is fairly vast, then if you have this kind of physical instinct which suddenly makes you as vast as the horizon, you have a sense of infinity, immensity; and the vaster you become, the quieter and more peaceful you become.

It is enough for you to have a contact with Nature like that.

There are many other means, but this one is very spontaneous. There is also... when you see something very beautiful you can have the same thing: a kind of inner joy and an opening to the forces, and so this widens you and fills you at the same time. There are many means but usually one does not use them. Naturally, if you enter into contemplation and aspire for a higher life and call down the forces from above, this recuperates your energies more than anything else. But there are numerous methods.

There we are. That's all? Good.

So, *au revoir*, my children.

Good night.

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This talk is based upon *Bases of Yoga*, Chapter 5 “Physical Consciousness, etc.”.

Sweet Mother, what is the meaning of “the psychic opening in the physical consciousness”?

I think I have already told you this once. One can find the psychic through each part of the consciousness: you can find a psychic behind the physical... you can enter into contact with the psychic directly through the physical consciousness, directly through the vital consciousness, directly through the mental consciousness. It is not as though you had to cross all the states of being in order to find the psychic. You can enter the psychic without leaving your physical consciousness, through interiorisation, because it is not an ascent or gradation. It is an interiorisation, and this interiorisation can be done without passing through the other states of being, directly. This is what Sri Aurobindo means: you are in the physical consciousness, nothing prevents you from opening this physical consciousness to the psychic consciousness, you don't need to develop vitally or mentally or to return to these states of being in order to enter into contact with the psychic. You can enter directly. The psychic manifests itself directly in your physical without passing through the other states; that's what it means.

Sweet Mother, here it is said: “a complete equality and peace and a complete dedication free from personal demand or desire in the physical and the lower vital parts are the thing to be established.”

Well, so what?

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How can it be done?

How should you do it? You must want it, then aspire; and then each time you do something which is contrary to this ideal, you must put it before yourself and put the light upon it and the will for change. Each time one makes an egoistic movement or does those things which should not be done, one must immediately catch it as though by its tail and then put it in the presence of one's ideal and one's will to progress, and put the light and consciousness upon it so that it may change.

To catch each thing that should not be done, catch it like that, and then hold it firmly in front of the light until the light can act upon it to transform it: this is a work which one can do all the time. No matter what one is doing, one can always do this work. Each time one becomes aware that there is something which is not all right, one must always catch it like this, prevent it from hiding, for it tries to hide: catch it and then keep it like this before the light of one's conscious will, and then put the light upon it so that it changes.

Nothing? Any questions? What?

(Mother turns to Pavitra who is seated with his eyes closed.)

Pavitra has a question? (He remains motionless, not having heard Mother. His neighbour pokes him with his pen to draw him out from his meditation. Pavitra opens his eyes amidst laughter. Mother tells him:) A question? (He makes a sign that he has no question. Laughter.)

Sweet Mother, sometimes an incarnated being has a very weak physical body; in this case isn't his body an obstacle to his work upon earth?

An incarnated being? Whom do you call an incarnated being?

For example, Ramakrishna or some others...

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Oh! Oh, oh, but I don't understand your question very well. The present being, whatever it may be, and whoever may be within it, always has a psychic being. You see, usually it depends on the degree of evolution of the psychic being but still every psychic being which is in a body has states of being formed in the present formation. Its work is always to transform these; it is as though this were the part of the universe given to him for his work of transformation. And even if he has a vaster mission than that of his own person, unless he does this work in his person he cannot do the other... You cannot change the outer world unless you begin by changing yourself. This is the first condition; and for everyone, great and small, old and young — old, I mean those who have lived very long, and young those who haven't lived very long — it is always the same work. This is why life upon earth for a psychic being is the opportunity to progress.

The duration of earthly life is the time of progress. Outside earthly life there is, so to say, no progress. It is in earthly life that there is the possibility and the means of progress. But for all conscious beings it is the same thing, not only for those you call incarnated. It is for everyone the same thing. One must first begin with the work on himself. When one has done the work on himself, one can do it on others; but the first thing to do is to do it on oneself.

*Sweet Mother, the Divine has come down to this world
of darkness and ignorance...*

And so, what?

How does He feel?...

What? What does He feel? You have never been in a place which is quite dark, where you are obliged to find your way without having a light? Has it happened to you?... A place you do not know and which is quite dark, where you have to find your way

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without a light? Have you never been in a place like that? No? Oh, you would know it if it has happened to you. For example, you are outside in... let us say, a forest... this is a big thing... but let us say, in a fairly large garden, and then, you have remained too long and there is no longer any light at all and you don't know how to find your way. Has this never happened to you? You always had enough light?

Sweet Mother, if there is someone who wants to have experiences or something like that, what is the first thing he should do?

To have experiences? What kind of experiences? Have visions or have psychological experiences or — what kind of experiences?

In fact, the whole life is an experience, isn't it? We spend our time having experiences. You mean having a contact with other realities than physical ones? Is it that? Ah!

Well, I think the first condition is to have, to begin with, the faith that there is something other than the physical reality. This can be the first condition. Then the second condition is to try to find what it is, and the best field of action is oneself. So one must begin by studying oneself a little, and manage to discern between what depends exclusively on the body and what on something else which is not the body. One can begin like that. One can begin by observing one's feelings or thoughts in their working; because... sensations are so linked to the body that it is very difficult to distinguish them, they are so tied to our senses, and the senses are instruments of the body, so it is difficult to discern. But feelings already escape... the feelings one experiences; and to try to find the root of this... and then the thoughts... What are thoughts?

If one begins to find out, to understand what a feeling is and what a thought is, and how it works, then one can already go quite far on the path with that. One must at the same time observe how his feelings and thoughts have an action on the

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body, what the reciprocity is. And then, there is another exercise which consists in looking into oneself for what is persistent, what is lasting, something which makes one say “I”, and which is not the body. For obviously, when one was very small, and then when each year one grows up, if one takes fairly long distances, for example a distance of about ten years, they are very different “I”s from what one was when as small as this (*gesture*), and then what one is now; it is difficult to say that it is the same person, you see. If one takes only this, still there is something which has the feeling of always being the same person. So one must reflect, seek, try to understand what it is. This indeed can lead you far on the path. Then if one also studies the relation between these different things — between thoughts, feelings, their action on the body, the reciprocal action of the body on these things — and also what it is that says “I” permanently, what it is that can trace a curve in the movement of the being, if one seeks carefully enough, it leads you quite far. Naturally if one seeks far enough and with enough persistence, one reaches the psychic.

It is the path to lead you to the psychic; and so this is the experience, it is the first experience. When one has the contact with the permanent part of one’s immortal being, through this immortality one can go still further and reach the Eternal. It is still another state of consciousness. But it is in this way that one follows the path, gradually. There are other ways, but this is the one which is always within reach. You see, one always has his body with him, and his feelings and thoughts, and at any moment of the day whatever, even in the night one can be busy with this; while if one must have something else around him, people or things or certain conditions, it is more complicated; but this is always there within one’s reach. Nobody can prevent you from having your body with you, your thought and your feelings, your sensations; it is the field of work which is always there, it is very convenient — no need to seek outside. One has all that is necessary. And so what must be acquired is the power of observation and the capacity for concentrating and for pursuing

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a little continuously a certain movement in one's being; as when you have some very strong feeling which takes hold of you, seizes you, then you must look at it, so to say, and concentrate upon it and manage to find out where it comes from, what has brought you this. Just this work of concentrating in order to succeed in finding this out is enough to lead you straight to an experience. And then if, for example, you want to do something practical, if in your feelings you are completely upset, agitated, if there's a kind of storm within, then by concentrating you can try to find out the cause of all that, you see, the inner cause, the real cause, and at the same time you can aspire to bring peace, quietude, a kind of inner immobility into your feelings, because without that you can't see clearly. When everything is in a whirlwind one sees nothing; as when you are in a great tempest and the wind is blowing from all sides and there are clouds of dust, you cannot see; it is the same thing. To be able to see, all must become quiet. So you must aspire and then draw into this storm... draw peace, quietude, immobility, like this; and then if you succeed it is still another experience, it is the beginning.

Of course one can sit down and try... not to meditate, because that's an activity of thought which does not lead to experience, but to concentrate and aspire and open oneself to the force from above; and if one does it persistently enough, there is a moment when one feels this force, this peace or this silence, this quietude descending, penetrating and descending into the being quite far. The first day it may be very little, and then gradually it becomes more. This also is an experience. All these are easy things to do.

But if, for example, one has a dream, when one remembers it very precisely in its details and concentrates in order to understand this dream, this too can be an experience, some door of understanding can open and one may suddenly get the deep meaning which was hidden behind the dream; this also is an experience — many things... and one always has the opportunity to have them. Of course the experience which most

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gives you the sense of a revelation or of something new is the one you have as soon as you enter into contact with the psychic, and in the psychic, when you are in the presence of the Divine; this indeed is the typical experience, the one which has an action on the whole orientation and activity of the being. But it may come quickly or may also take time. Yet between the state in which one is at present and that state there are many rungs. I mean these are rungs of experiences one can have.

So it is a vast programme. The first steps are these: to collect oneself, try to be very quiet and see what is happening within, the relations between things, and what is happening inside, not just live only on the surface.

There. That's all?

When one meditates there are moments when one sees very unpleasant forms in front of himself for some days. It begins and later ends. What does it mean?

Yes, it means probably that instead of meditating in a silent concentration, one has opened one's consciousness either in a vital domain or in a not very pleasant mental domain. That's what it means. It can also mean — it depends on the degree of development one has reached — it can mean in certain cases, when one is master of one's concentration and knows where one goes — still this already requires a fairly great discipline — it may be that it is a particular attack of adverse forces, of bad wills, coming either from certain beings or from certain domains; but it is not necessarily attacks; it can simply be that one has opened one's consciousness in a place that's not very desirable or else sometimes, often, that one had in himself a number of movements of the vital and the mind which were not very desirable, and when one enters the silence of meditation or that kind of passive attitude of expectation of something which is going to happen, all these vibrations which have gone out of

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him come back to him in their real appearance which is not very pleasant. This happens often: one had bad feelings, not positively wicked but still things which are not desirable, bad thoughts, movements of dissatisfaction, revolt or impatience, or a lack of contentment or... you see, one may be angry with somebody, even in thought, no need of speaking... things like that. When one is quiet and tries to be still so as to have an experience, all these things come back to him in their true form, that is, not very pleasant forms: very ugly, forms which are at times very ugly. I think that I have already told you this several times: it's something that happens frequently if you don't control your thoughts and your vital reactions and if someone has displeased you for some reason or other, if that person has done or said something which you do not like, and you consider him hostile and so the spontaneous reaction is to want to punish him in some way or other or if one is still more primitive — if I may say so — to want to take vengeance or hope that something bad will happen to him.

However, it may even come very spontaneously, a violent reaction, like that, then you don't think about it any more. But now, at night, when you are asleep, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, in a case like this, the person in question comes to you with an extreme violence, either to kill you or to make you ill, as though he wished you as much harm as possible, and then in your ignorance you say, "Well, I was quite right to be angry with him." But it is quite simply your own formation which returns to you, nothing else but that. The person has nothing to do with it — he is quite innocent in the affair. This is a phenomenon which occurs very often, I mean for people who have movements of rancour or anger or violence; and they always see in a dream of this kind the justification of their movements — whereas it is only a very striking image of their own feelings. For the formation returns upon one in this way.

Then in these cases what should one do?

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What should one do? First, never have bad thoughts to begin with; and then, secondly, never be afraid, even if you see extremely ugly things — not only have no fear but no disgust and no repulsion, simply a perfect quietude — and try to be as pure and calm as possible. Then, whatever it may be, whether it be your own formation or it comes from others, whether it be an attack or a bad place — no matter what it is — everything will be all right. But above all, this: quiet, calm, naturally sheltered from every kind of possible fear, and without any disgust, without any recoiling, nothing; like that: a perfect indifference with a complete calm. Then nothing bad can happen, absolutely nothing. Even if it is truly an enemy who comes to attack you, he becomes powerless.

In all cases, without exception, whatever may happen, calm and quietude and serene peace and an absolute faith in the divine Grace — if you have all this, nothing can happen to you. And you must have all this if you want to have experiences; because experiences without this — it's not good; but with this, it's excellent.

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This talk is based upon *Bases of Yoga*, Chapter 5, “Physical Consciousness, etc.”. This evening the reading ends with the following lines:

“The subconscious is the main cause why all things repeat themselves and nothing ever gets changed except in appearance. It is the cause why people say character cannot be changed, the cause also of the constant return of things one hoped to have got rid of for ever.... All too that is suppressed without being wholly got rid of sinks down there and remains as seed ready to surge up or sprout up at any moment.”

But it is not hopeless, because if it were hopeless never could we attain physical transformation.

There.

Now, questions.

Sweet Mother, how should we reject something in the vital so that it doesn't enter the subconscious?

Ah!

There is a great difference between pushing back a thing simply because one doesn't want it and changing the state of one's consciousness which makes the thing totally foreign to one's nature. Usually, when one has a movement one doesn't want, one drives it away or pushes it back, but one doesn't take the precaution of finding within oneself what has served and still serves as a support for this movement, the particular tendency, the fold of the consciousness which enables this thing to enter the consciousness. If, on the contrary, instead of simply making

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a movement of reprobation and rejection, one enters deeply into his vital consciousness and finds the support, that is, a kind of particular little vibration buried very deeply in a corner, often in such a dark corner that it is difficult to find it there; if one starts hunting it down, that is, if one goes within, concentrates, follows as it were the trail of this movement to its origin, one finds something like a very tiny serpent coiled up, something at times quite tiny, not bigger than a pea, but very black and sunk very deeply.

And then there are two methods: either to put so intense a light, the light of a truth-consciousness so strong, that this will be dissolved; or else to catch the thing as with pincers, pull it out from its place and hold it up before one's consciousness. The first method is radical but one doesn't always have at his disposal this light of truth, so one can't always use it. The second method can be taken, but it hurts, it hurts as badly as the extraction of a tooth; I don't know if you have ever had a tooth pulled out, but it hurts as much as that, and it hurts here, like that. (*Mother shows the centre of the chest and makes a movement of twisting.*) And usually one is not very courageous. When it hurts very much, well, one tries to efface it like this (*gesture*) and that is why things persist. But if one has the courage to take hold of it and pull it until it comes out and to put it before himself, even if it hurts very much... to hold it up like this (*gesture*) until one can see it clearly, and then dissolve it, then it is finished. The thing will never again hide in the subconscious and will never again return to bother you. But this is a radical operation. It must be done like an operation.

You must first have a great deal of perseverance in the search, for usually when one begins searching for these things the mind comes to give a hundred and one favourable explanations for your not needing to search. It tells you, "Why no, it is not at all your fault; it is this, it is that, it is the circumstances, it is the people, these are things received from outside — all kinds of excellent excuses, which, unless you are very firm in your resolution, make you let go, and then it is finished; and so, after

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a short time the whole business has to be started again, the bad impulse or the thing you didn't want, the movement you didn't want, comes back, and so you must begin everything over again — till the day you decide to perform the operation. When the operation is done it is over, one is free. But, as I said, you must distrust mental explanations, because each time one says, "Yes, yes, at other times it was like that, but this time truly, truly it is not my fault, it is not my fault." There you are. So it is finished. You must begin again. The subconscious is there, the thing goes down, remains there, very comfortably, and the first day you are not on your guard, hop! it surges up again and it can last — I knew people for whom it lasted more than thirty-five years, because they did not resolve even once to do what was necessary.

Yes, it hurts, it hurts a little, that's all; afterwards it is finished. So there we are.

Nothing?... Nobody has anything to say? You, no? You have something to ask, you?

Outside the subject.

Outside the subject? This subject includes everything. So how can it be outside the subject? The subconscious, we are told, is universal.

Mother, when one is here and is following the integral yoga here, isn't...

"One is here" means "one is in the Ashram" or "one is in the class"? In the class? No! (*Laughter*)

We are in the class and in the Ashram also.

Ah, good! So?

Is it sure that in the next life too one will be here or in

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the Ashram? Or will it be that one will go somewhere else for other experiences?

This depends on the cases. First, what do you call the next life? You mean for people who have left their body and will take another?

Yes.

Well, it depends absolutely on the condition in which they died and their last wish, and on the resolution of the psychic. It is not a mechanical or imposed thing, it is different for each one.

I have already told you many times that, for the destiny which follows after death, the last state of consciousness is usually the most important. That is, if at the moment of death one has the intense aspiration to return to continue his work, then the conditions are arranged for it to be done. But, you see, there are all the possibilities for what happens after death. There are people who return in the psychic. You see, I have told you that the outer being is very rarely preserved; so we speak only of the psychic consciousness which, indeed, always persists. And then there are people for whom the psychic returns to the psychic domain to assimilate the experience they have had and to prepare their future life. This may take centuries, it depends on the people.

The more evolved the psychic is, the nearer it is to its complete maturity, the greater the time between the births. There are beings who reincarnate only after a thousand years, two thousand years.

The closer one is to the beginning of the formation, the closer are the reincarnations; and sometimes even, altogether at the lower level, when man is quite near the animal, it goes like this (*gesture*), that is, it is not unusual for people to reincarnate in the children of their children, like that, something like that, or just in the next generation. But this is always on a very primitive

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level of evolution, and the psychic being is not very conscious, it is in the state of formation. And as it becomes more developed, the reincarnations, as I said, are at a greater distance from one another. When the psychic being is fully developed, when it no longer needs to return to earth for its development, when it is absolutely free, it has the choice between no longer coming back to earth if it finds that its work lies elsewhere or if it prefers to remain in the purely psychic consciousness, without reincarnating; or else it can come when it wants, as it wants, where it wants, perfectly consciously. And there are those who have united with forces of a universal order and with entities of the Overmind or elsewhere, who remain all the time in the earth atmosphere and take on bodies successively for the work. This means that the moment the psychic being is completely formed and absolutely free — when it is completely formed it becomes absolutely free — it can do anything it likes, it depends on what it chooses; therefore one can't say, "It will be like this, it will be like that"; it does exactly what it wants and it can even announce (that has happened), at the moment of the death of the body, what its next reincarnation will be and what it will do, and already choose what it is going to do. But before this state, which is not very frequent — it depends absolutely on the degree of development of the psychic and the hope formulated by the integral consciousness of the being — there is still the mental, vital and physical consciousness, united with the psychic consciousness; so at that moment, the moment of death, the moment of leaving the body, it formulates a hope or an aspiration or a will, and usually this decides the future life.

So one can't ask a question saying, "What happens and what should be done?" All possible things happen, and everything can be done.

Everyone has one thing in mind: he asks a general question but in his mind it is an altogether particular question; but this — these things one does not discuss in public.

(*Mother turns to Pavitra*) Pavitra, you have a question?

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(*Pavitra answers that he hasn't.*) Ah, that's a pity.

Mother, here it is said that the light of truth is not always at one's disposal...

It is always there; but one can't always use it.

But if...

It is always there; it is everywhere; but it is not at your disposal in the sense that you don't know how to make use of it.

But if one went to you to ask how?

Ah! But one must not ask personal questions. Of course if you ask me, "What should *I* do?" — anyone at all among you — I shall tell you, "My children, it is very easy, you have only to call me, and then when you feel the contact, well, you put it upon the thing till that part has understood."

But here too you must know, it hurts a little; I am warning you, you see, because the thing is clinging somewhere, and in order to pull it out you must have courage; and when you put the light of truth, well, it burns, sometimes it smarts, you see; you must know how to bear it. The sincerity must be sufficient to... instead of shutting yourself up again and saying, "Oh! It hurts", you must open very wide and receive fully.

Some people have all kinds of little things like this in their head, dark little things. Some people have them here (*Mother points to the heart*), others have them lower down, for each one it depends... but for each one it is the same thing, it is always... I am saying this because it is very remarkable that if one does the work — whoever it may be — the result is always the same, wherever it may be, whether in the head or the chest or in all the centres of consciousness, if one pushes the investigation far enough, step by step, step by step, untiringly, one always reaches

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something; from far it looks like a pea... like the peas... a little black pea; but if one draws near carefully enough — it depends on the degree of concentration — one perceives that it is like a very tiny... serpent, the size of a microbe, but it is very small, all coiled up like that, rolled upon itself like that. Then one takes it by the tail and pulls it out.

Sweet Mother, are there as many serpents as bad movements?

Yes, precisely! (*Laughter*) That makes a lot, quite an army. When it is in the head it is troublesome, because it is still more difficult to discover them, and one is so full of wrong ideas that it is very difficult to put any order in there. Where it is easiest to find and cure is here (*Mother shows the centre of the chest*), but it is there that it hurts most; however it is the place where one finds it most easily and cures it most radically. Lower down in the vital it is more obscure and entangled — it is quite muddled. It is all mixed up and there are many of these things — when they are there, there are many. You must put some order there first before finding them. There are some which are entangled like this (*gesture*). For example, many people have the tendency to fly into a rage — suddenly it takes possession of them. Puff! They get terribly angry. It is here that one must look for the cause; and here it is all entangled, like this, all mixed up, and one must go very deep and very fast because this spreads with the swiftness of a flood; and when it has spread, it is quite a mass of... like a black smoke which rises and burdens the consciousness, and it is very, very difficult to put any order in there. But when one feels that the fury is going to rise up, if one hurries there immediately like that in the vital centre, and goes there with a torch which lights up well, one can find the corner. If one finds the corner, hop! one does this, gets hold of it, and it is finished, the anger falls instantaneously, even before one has had the time to say a word. I give this example; there are hundreds of others.

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All affairs of feelings, vanity, ambition, passion — passion... yes, but still not only material passion: I mean (I don't like to use the word because it is a travesty, but still) what men call love — all that, it is there one finds it, all attachments, all sentimentality, all this, it is in there.

And in the head?

Ah! In the head it is all the perversions of thought, all the treacheries — treacheries, there is a huge number of them: one betrays one's soul so often and so persistently, it is frightful — all the decisions, the points of view and favourable explanations, as I was telling you, and then a kind of habit of criticising... What one doesn't want to hear, when there is something higher which makes you feel your fault, there is a habit of immediately finding an explanation and a severe criticism of the idea or thought; or else some people turn it into ridicule; there are people who immediately oppose it with another idea or some commonplace notion or other. You can't imagine the bazaar there is in the head! It is something terrible. If you were to look really objectively at what is going on in there, it is frightful — before you put some order, see clearly, arrange all that, see that two contradictory ideas are not lined up parallel.

I know a large number of people who shelter in their minds contradictory ideas, not organised or synthesised — there is no question of a synthesis for them — but like... an almost fraternal cohabitation among things which are mortally opposed, that is, ideas which cannot lodge together. You can arrange them in a vast synthesis but that of course is a work of a higher order; yet two things, two ideas which have absolutely contradictory consequences in action and are absolutely contradictory explanations of the same fact... and these two things are there, side by side, they are even sometimes so close that one feels they are joined and live together without being troubled by the ridiculousness of their association.

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I should one day give you a series of examples. Very often I tell you this, I have never given any examples; but one day I shall collect a number of examples for you and then give them to you. You will see this; if it were not sad it would be funny. Most men who have this don't even notice it, it does not trouble them. If you have some ideas about things — you should surely have some ideas about things, about the world, about life, about the purpose of existence, the aim of existence, the future realisation; in fact you do have many ideas — well, try this little game one day: put all these ideas before yourself, like this, and then arrange them; you will see how easy it will be and you will perhaps have much fun; you will find surprising things.

Already, this work alone, just this work of bringing them out, of simply putting them side by side in front of you, all the ideas you have on any subject whatever, as though you were obliged to write them out as an exercise — you see, a composition you are asked to write: “What do you think of this thing, this subject?” and you are obliged to make a draft of it — put all the ideas side by side, and you will see, it will be amusing. Unless you are in the habit of having a central idea, if possible a fixed central truth around which you arrange all the ideas, you organise them in a logical order with the right relation between each of them, each one in its place, and you make a kind of monument of it — if you have never done this and you try to read in your mind, you will see something there, really. In fact, I tell you, if it were not sad it would be very funny. One can't imagine to what an extent one can, within the space of an hour, think about the most contradictory things, and without any astonishment.

It is a good exercise to put it down: All right, I am going to write a short essay on “What is... (take this, take anything at all, it doesn't matter), what is the goal life aims at?” Or else “What is the purpose of existence upon earth?” or “Why are men born in order to die?” anything at all, take things like that. I don't say take “Why did you play football today and will play

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basketball tomorrow?” no, not things like that, because these you can always explain. I am speaking to you of things a little more general. Put that before you and then line up the ideas you have on the subject, you will see it will be amusing.

Sometimes while reading a text one has ideas, then Sweet Mother, how can one distinguish between the other person's idea and one's own?

Oh! This, this doesn't exist, the other person's idea and one's own idea.

Nobody has ideas of his own: it is an immensity from which one draws according to his personal affinity; ideas are a collective possession, a collective wealth.

Only, there are different stages. So there is the most common level, the one where all our brains bathe; this indeed swarms here, it is the level of “Mr. Everybody”. And then there is a level that's slightly higher for people who are called thinkers. And then there are higher levels still — many — some of them are beyond words but they are still domains of ideas. And then there are those capable of shooting right up, catching something which is like a light and making it come down with all its stock of ideas, all its stock of thoughts. An idea from a higher domain if pulled down organises itself and is crystallised in a large number of thoughts which can express that idea differently; and then if you are a writer or a poet or an artist, when you make it come lower down still, you can have all kinds of expressions, extremely varied and choice around a single little idea but one coming from very high above. And when you know how to do this, it teaches you to distinguish between the pure idea and the way of expressing it.

Some people cannot do it in their own head because they have no imagination or faculty for writing, but they can do it through study by reading what others have written. There are, you know, lots of poets, for instance, who have expressed the

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same idea — the same idea but with such different forms that when one reads many of them it becomes quite interesting to see (for people who love to read and read much). Ah, this idea, that one has said it like this, that other has expressed it like that, another has formulated it in this way, and so on. And so you have a whole stock of expressions which are expressions by different poets of the same single idea up there, above, high above. And you notice that there is an almost essential difference between the pure idea, the typical idea and its formulation in the mental world, even the speculative or artistic mental world. This is a very good thing to do when one loves gymnastics. It is mental gymnastics.

Well, if you want to be truly intelligent, you must know how to do mental gymnastics; as, you see, if you want really to have a fairly strong body you must know how to do physical gymnastics. It is the same thing. People who have never done mental gymnastics have a poor little brain, quite over-simple, and all their life they think like children. One must know how to do this — not take it seriously, in the sense that one shouldn't have convictions, saying, "This idea is true and that is false; this formulation is correct and that one is not and this religion is the true one and that religion is false", and so on and so forth... this, if you enter into it, you become absolutely stupid.

But if you can see all that and, for example, take all the religions, one after another and see how they have expressed the same aspiration of the human being for some Absolute, it becomes very interesting; and then you begin... yes, you begin to be able to juggle with all that. And then when you have mastered it all, you can rise above it and look at all the eternal human discussions with a smile. So there you are master of the thought and can no longer fly into a rage because someone else does not think as you, something that's unfortunately a very common malady here.

Now, there we are. Nobody has any questions, no?
That's enough? Finished!

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This talk is based upon *Bases of Yoga*, Chapter 5, “Physical Consciousness, etc.”.

Here Sri Aurobindo says: “As for the things in our nature that are thrown away from us by rejection but come back, it depends on where you throw them. Very often there is a sort of procedure about it.” What is this procedure, Sweet Mother?

It is what he describes later. He explains afterwards that what is in the mind is thrown out into the vital, what is in the higher vital is thrown out into the lower vital, and what is in the lower vital is thrown out into the physical, and what is in the physical is thrown out into the subconscious. He says it — all this.

But I thought there was a procedure for rejection?

No, this is the procedure, to reject always into a lower part of the being, and finally the last refuge, he says, is in the inconscient; and in order to get rid of something, to tell the truth, you must go right into the inconscient; if one pursues it there, it cannot go lower down. So there is only one solution for it, to transform itself.

Can't one transform it without going further?

One can. But it is quite difficult. But one can do it, because rejecting is not the best method. You see, to do this (*gesture*) is the easiest way; something troubles you, you do this (*gesture*), as you do for flies; but it is a little as with the flies, it takes a round and then comes back.

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But what is necessary is what I explained to you last time in detail: to find out why it comes, why it is there, and change it — the cause itself. Then it no longer returns, there is no affinity any longer.

Things come to you because they have an affinity. There is something to which they can cling, a kind of sympathy somewhere, which may not be very conscious or very open, but there is one. And if it were not there, the thing would no longer come. There is a whole set of things which never come to bother you any longer, once you have changed the essential points in your nature.

I wanted to ask, I... I ask you a question: What is the difference between the subliminal and the superconscient? Nolini is going to tell us this.

(Nolini) *The subliminal is what is behind...*

Inside, and the superconscient is above. Good, that's what I thought. But I wasn't sure.

Now then! No questions this evening?

Sweet Mother, when we learn something by heart to recite it, what is the true way of learning, so that it remains?

The true way so that it remains is to understand, it is not to learn by heart. You learn something by heart, it is mechanical, you see; but after some time it will be effaced, unless you make use of it constantly. For example, you are made to learn by heart the multiplication tables; if you constantly use them, you will remember them, but if by chance for years you remain without using them, you will forget them completely. But if you understand the principle, you will be able to remember them. You see, the principle of multiplication, if you understand it with a mathematical sense, you will no longer need to learn

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it by heart, the operation will be done quite naturally in your brain; and for everything it is the same.

If you understand the thing, if you have the sense of the principle which is behind, you can remember it indefinitely, for hundreds of years if you live for hundreds of years; whereas something you have learnt by heart... after some time the brain-cells multiply, are replaced, and some things are wiped out. You are still too small for experiences of this kind, but later one realises that in one's life there are things which remain like landmarks, there are others which are totally effaced to the extent that one doesn't remember them at all, they are gone. But there are things like that, truly like milestones, like landmarks in life. Well, these things were conscious experiences, that is, they were understood; so the experience remains indefinitely, and with just a tiny movement of the consciousness you can bring it forward. But something that is learnt mechanically — unless, I tell you, you make use of it daily, it is effaced.

Sweet Mother, things which come "from the general Nature" means...?

What does it mean?

I shall ask later!

There are movements of certain vibrations which are vibrations of the species, you see, movements peculiar to the species to which you belong — there is the human species as there are all kinds. Now, some of these movements are not personal movements at all, they are movements of the species.

The human species has certain ways of being which are particular to it, which we reproduce almost automatically, as for example, walking upright, like this (*gesture*), whereas a cat goes on four feet, you see. This instinct of standing on one's two hind feet, upright, is peculiar to man, it is a movement that

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belongs to the species; to sit as we do with the head up, you see, to lie down as we do on the back...

You have only to watch animals: they lie down curled up, don't they? Almost all. It is with man that this way of lying on one's back, stretched out, begins, I think; I don't at all think that monkeys sleep like that, I think they sleep doubled up, that it is man who has started habits of this kind. And this reminds me...

I had a cat — in those days I used to sleep on the floor — which always came and slipped under the mosquito-net and slept beside me. Well, this cat slept quite straight, it did not sleep as cats do; it put its head here and then lay down like this (*gesture*), alongside my legs with its two forepaws like this, and its two little hind legs quite straight. And there was something very, very curious about it which I saw one night, like that. I used to ask myself why it was like this, and one night I saw a little Russian woman of the people with a fur bonnet and three little children, and this woman had a kind of adoration for her children and always wanted to look for a shelter for them; I don't know, I don't know the story, but I saw that she had her three little children, very small ones, with her... one like this, one like that, one like that (*Mother shows the difference in height*), and she was dragging them along with her and looking for a corner to put them in safety. Something must have happened to her, she must have died suddenly with a kind of very animal maternal instinct of a certain kind, but all full of fear — fear, anguish and worry — and this something must have come from there and in some way or other had reincarnated. It was a movement — it was not a person, you know, it was a movement which belonged to this person and must have come up in the cat. It was there for some reason or other, you see, I don't know how it happened, I know nothing about it, but this cat was completely human in its ways. And very soon afterwards it had three kittens, like that; and it was extraordinary, it didn't want to leave them, it refused to leave them, it was entirely... it did not eat, did not go

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to satisfy its needs, it was always with its young. When one day it had an idea — nobody had said anything, of course — it took one kitten, as they take them, by the skin of the neck, and came and put it between my feet; I did not stir; it returned, took the second, put it there; it took the third, it put it there, and when all three were there, it looked at me, mewed and was gone. And this was the first time it went out after having had them; it went to the garden, went to satisfy its needs and to eat, because it was at peace, they were there between my feet. And when it had its young, it wanted to carry them on its back like a woman. And when it slept beside me, it slept on the back. It was never like a cat.

Well, these things are habits of the species, movements of the species. There are many others of the kind, you see, but this is an example.

These animals which are extraordinary like this one, after death do they come back in a human body?

Ah!

There was a cat... what its name was I don't know; and I had many cats, you know, so I don't remember now; there was one called Kiki, it was the first son of this cat, and then there was another, its second son (that is to say, born another time) which was called Brownie.

This one was admirable and it died of the cat disease — as there is a disease of the dogs, there is a disease of the kittens — I don't know how it caught the thing, but it was wonderful during its illness and I was taking care of it as of a child. And it always expressed a kind of aspiration. There was a time before it fell ill... we used to have in those days meditation in a room of the Library House, in the room there — Sri Aurobindo's own room — and we used to sit on the floor. And there was an armchair in a corner, and when we gathered for the meditation this cat came every time and settled in the armchair and literally it entered

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into a trance, it had movements of trance; it did not sleep, it was not asleep, it was truly in a trance; it gave signs of that and had astonishing movements, as when animals dream; and it didn't want to come out from it, it refused to come out, it remained in it for hours. But it never came in until we were beginning the meditation. It settled there and remained there throughout the meditation. We indeed had finished but it remained, and it was only when I went to take it, called it in a particular way, brought it back into its body, that it consented to go away; otherwise no matter who came and called it, it did not move. Well, this cat always had a great aspiration, a kind of aspiration to become a human being; and in fact, when it left its body it entered a human body. Only it was a very tiny part of the consciousness, you see, of the human being; it was like the opposite movement from that of the woman with the other cat. But this one was a cat which leaped over many births, so to say, many psychic stages to enter into contact with a human body. It was a simple enough human body, but still, all the same...

There is a difference in the development of a cat and of a human being...

It happens... I think these are exceptional cases, but still it happens.

In these cases is the psychic conscious?

The aspiration is conscious, yes, conscious. The aspiration was very conscious in it, very conscious. It is not a formed psychic as when the psychic becomes a completely independent being, it is not that; but it is an aspiration, it is an ardent aspiration for progress — as we, you know, we have the aspiration to become supramental beings instead of remaining human beings, well, it was something absolutely similar: it was a cat doing yoga — exactly — to become a man.

It was perhaps because its mother had in it a movement, a

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formation, an emanation of consciousness which had belonged to a human being; it is probably that which had left a kind of nostalgia for the human life which gave it this intensity of aspiration. But truly it did yoga for that.

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This talk is based upon *Bases of Yoga*, Chapter 5, “Physical Consciousness, etc.”.

Sweet Mother, here it is written: “There is a Yoga-Shakti lying coiled or asleep...” How can it be awakened?

I think it awakens quite naturally the moment one takes the resolution to do the yoga. If the resolution is sincere and one has an aspiration, it wakes up by itself.

In fact, it is perhaps its awakening which gives the aspiration to do yoga.

It is possible that it is a result of the Grace... or after some conversation or reading, something that has suddenly given you the idea and aspiration to know what yoga is and to practise it. Sometimes just a simple conversation with someone is enough or a passage one reads from a book; well, it awakens this Yoga-Shakti and it is this which makes you do your yoga.

One is not aware of it at first — except that something has changed in our life, a new decision is taken, a turning.

What is it, this Yoga-Shakti, Sweet Mother?

It is the energy of progress. It is the energy which makes you do the yoga, precisely, makes you progress — consciously. It is a conscious energy.

In fact, the Yoga-Shakti is the power to do yoga.

Sweet Mother, isn't it more difficult to draw the divine forces from below?

I think it is absolutely useless.

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Some people think that there are more reserves of energy — I have heard this very often: a great reserve of energy — in the earth, and that if they draw this energy into themselves they will be able to do things; but it is always mixed.

The divine Presence is everywhere, that's well understood. And in fact, there is neither above nor below. What is called above and below, I think that is rather the expression of a degree of consciousness or a degree of materiality; there is the more unconscious and the less unconscious, there is what is *subconscious* and what is *superconscious*, and so we say above and below for the facility of speech.

But in fact, the idea is to draw from the energies of the earth which, when you are standing up, are under your feet, that is, below in relation to you. But these energies are always mixed, and mostly they are terribly dark.

No questions?

(To the child who had asked the last question) Do you have another?

Sweet Mother, what does it mean exactly — “to go down into the lower parts or ranges of nature”?

It is precisely to go down into the darkness, to go far away from the light in order to draw nearer to the darkness, to go farther away from the consciousness in order to go closer to the inconscience.

One has in his consciousness the feeling of rising above what is obscure and ordinary and unconscious, of raising himself — because usually our head is on top and our head is more conscious than the rest of our body — and the impression that there is above him a greater consciousness. So when one makes an effort to progress, at the same time one makes an effort of ascent. Sometimes one has even symbolically the impression of climbing a mountain and wanting to reach the summit, that is, as close as possible to the free expanses of the light, of what is purer.

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And if one doesn't take care, quite naturally, spontaneously, one slips back into the ordinary consciousness.

There is a very great power of attraction in low, obscure, ordinary things — the impression of being drawn by the feet into a deep mire... certain contacts, certain actions, certain movements of consciousness give you the impression that you are sliding into a dark and muddy hole.

Often when one has made an effort and progressed, one has the feeling of rising above himself into a purer, clearer, truer light and consciousness. But if one doesn't keep this aspiration and is not definitively settled there, a very tiny thing is enough, a kind of physical disharmony, for example, or a meeting, a word exchanged or a movement made unconsciously, for one to feel that something is falling; and one can no longer get hold of that height where one was, that light. So one has to withdraw again, climb the slope, escape from the attraction from below. Sometimes it takes time; one slides down very fast but usually climbs back with a certain difficulty.

It is as when one struggles physically by yogic means with a disease, it goes alternately. One can succeed in pulling himself out, so to say, from the disease, in withdrawing from it, in cutting off the relation one had with it; and then suddenly one emerges above this feeling of unease, disorder and confusion and realises that one is cured. But sometimes it is enough even to remember, a movement of wonder is enough, a memory of what it was is enough for everything to be reversed once more and for one to have to begin the same work over again. Sometimes one has to begin again thrice, four times, ten times, twenty times. And then some people can make the effort once, but the second time they no longer do it well, and the third time they don't do it at all; and they tell you, "Oh! One can't be cured by occult means, the divine Force doesn't cure you, it is better to take medicines." So for these, it is better to go to the doctor because this means that they have no spiritual perseverance and only material means can convince them of their effectiveness.

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When one wants to change something of the material life, whether the character or the functioning of the organs or habits, one must have an unflinching perseverance, be ready to begin again a hundred times the same thing with the same intensity with which one did it the first time and as though one had never done it before.

People who are touchy cannot do this. But if one can't do it, one can't do yoga, in any case not the integral yoga, one can't change one's body.

To change one's body one must be ready to do millions of times the same thing, because the body is a creature of habits and functions by routine, and because to destroy a routine one must persevere for years.

That's all?

It is outside the text.

That doesn't matter, my child.

Sweet Mother, the true self and the psychic are the same thing?

No. The true self is what is also called the truth of the being. It is the divine element which is your individual reality. It is the divine element which makes you a separate individuality, and it is at the same time a fragment of the one Being and naturally the one Being itself; that is, while being a particular aspect which makes you an individual, it is an integral part of the One which makes you only an objectivisation of the One.

This is the true self. The psychic being is a terrestrial formation. It is human beings who have a psychic being which has been developed upon earth and by earthly life and which is a projection of the divine Consciousness into Matter to awaken Matter out of its inertia so that it takes the path back to the Divine.

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But in certain cases the true self is found in the psychic being, that is, it dwells in the psychic being — but not always.

There is always a divine Presence in the psychic being, but it is the divine Presence which was at the origin of the psychic formation, it is an emanation from the divine Consciousness; whereas the true self is not a terrestrial formation. It precedes the terrestrial formation.

Is that all? No more questions? You have one still? You can ask.

Sweet Mother, when one has a difficulty in the day and it is not possible to see you or tell you about it, what should one do?

If it is not at all possible, you must sit quite alone, try to become silent, call, call me as though I were there, make me come and put the difficulty before me absolutely sincerely and objectively; and then remain very silent, very quiet and wait for the result.

And I think the result comes. For it depends on the nature of the difficulty. If it is a problem that's to be solved, then the solution comes; if it is an inner movement, something that has gone wrong, then usually if one does this very sincerely, well, it is put back in its place; and if it is a decision that's to be taken, if it is something one doesn't know whether one must do or not do, then this too, if one is very quiet one knows whether it's a yes or no; it comes: "Yes" or "No". Then here you must not discuss any more, the mind must not say, "But if...? and then...", for then everything becomes foggy. You must say, "Good!" and follow like this. But for this you must be sincere, in the sense that you must have no preferences.

If the difficulty comes from one part of the being wanting one thing and another part of the being knowing that one must not have it, then it becomes complicated because the part which wants can try to introduce its own will into the answer. So when one sits down, first one must begin by persuading it to make a

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little act of sincere surrender, and it is here that one can make true progress, saying, “Now I am conscious that it is this that I desire, but I am ready to give up my desire if that should be done.” But you must do this not only in the head, it must be done sincerely, and then you proceed as I said. Then one knows — knows what’s to be done.

Sometimes it is easier when you write it down; you imagine that I am there and then take a paper and write on it what you wanted to tell me. Then just the very fact of formulating it clearly sometimes gives you the true picture of the situation and you can have the answer more easily. It depends, sometimes it is necessary, sometimes not, but if you are in a confusion, a kind of whirlwind, above all, if there is a vital upsurge, the fact of compelling yourself to put it on paper already quietens you, it begins the work of purification.

In fact, one should always do this, when he feels that he is caught by an impulse of some kind or other, particularly impulses of anger. If one takes as an absolute discipline, instead of acting or speaking (because speech is an action), instead of acting under the impulse, if one withdraws and then does as I said, one sits down quietly, concentrates and then looks at his anger quietly, one writes it down, when one has finished writing, it is gone — in any case, most often.

6 April 1955

This talk is based upon *Bases of Yoga*, Chapter 5, “Physical Consciousness, etc.”.

What is this psychoanalysis of Freud, Sweet Mother?

Ah, my child, it is something that was in vogue, very much in vogue at the beginning of the century... no, in the middle of the century!

(*Mother turns to Pavitra*) Do you know, Pavitra, when it was in fashion?

(*Pavitra*) *At the beginning of the century.*

At the beginning of the century, that's it.

This is what Sri Aurobindo says: dangerous, useless, ignorant, superficial; and it was in fashion because people like these things, it corresponds precisely with all that is unhealthy in their nature. You know how children love to waddle in the mud! Well, big people are no better than that. There!

Sweet Mother, what does “the subliminal being” mean, exactly?

Well, it is what he says, you know. It's what is behind. I think it is what could be called the subtle physical, the subtle vital, the subtle mind. It is something that's behind what is manifested. One can imagine that what is manifested is like a layer or like a crust or a bark; it is that which we see and with which we are in touch. And it clothes something, it clothes or expresses something which is more subtle and serves as its support.

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When one dreams, one goes very often into his subliminal being, and there things are almost the same and yet not absolutely the same; there is a great resemblance and yet there is a difference; and usually this is greater. One has the impression of entering into something that's vaster; and, for example, one feels that one can do more, that one knows more, one has a power and clear-sightedness which one doesn't have in the ordinary consciousness; one has the impression while dreaming that one knows many more things than when one is awake. No? Doesn't this happen? You don't have dreams like that?... when one dreams and knows a lot, for example, about the secret causes of things, about what a movement expresses... all that, one feels that one knows it. For instance, when one dreams of someone, one knows better what he thinks, what he wants, all these things, better than when one is in waking contact with him. This happens when one has entered the subliminal. Very often one dreams in the subliminal.

Has the subliminal a contact with the psychic?

Not directly, not more directly than the outside being. If externally, in your ordinary consciousness you have a contact with the psychic, that also has a contact with the psychic, or rather one can put it the other way round: if that has a contact with the psychic, it helps you to have a contact with the psychic, but not necessarily, not always; it depends on the degree of development of the being. It is not necessarily more enlightened, more balanced — no. It is more subtle, it is less dull than our outer consciousness. Our external consciousness is so dull, it has no depth; as our outer understanding has no depth, our sensations have no depth; all this is something as though flat. So here it is fuller, but not necessarily more true.

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Then why is it the most important?

Because it is internal. This is what supports the outer. The outer is only an appearance of this. As I said, in a dream when one goes there, one knows things which one doesn't know, one can do things, one is in touch with things which one doesn't know in the waking consciousness, because it is too superficial.

It is like the inside of something. The outside is the expression of that, but an altogether surface expression. So naturally it looks the same; in any case more than a resemblance, it has an identity with what we see of it from outside. We see the form, don't we, the expression; well, this expression has necessarily an analogy — more than an analogy — an identity with what is inside. So if, externally, we see that someone is absolutely ignorant of his psychic being, it is impossible that internally he is quite conscious of it; he can be closer, but he cannot be conscious of the psychic without its being reflected outside. Therefore, if it is not reflected outside, it means that it is not truly established within.

Understand, no?

Not very well.

Then what shall we do? Ask another question about the same subject. Perhaps so you will understand.

Is the subliminal self the same thing?

That, my child, if you begin to ask me things like this, you must ask the gentleman who is seated behind you [Nolini], because these things I forget.

Where is the subliminal self mentioned here?

“The subliminal self stands behind and supports the whole superficial man...”

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This is what I have just told you. I have just told you this. How can we explain it?

(Long silence)

It is perhaps — perhaps — something like this, like the taste of a fruit. You know, you see a fruit, it has an appearance, it has a certain colour, it seems to you of a certain kind, but you cannot very well know what it tastes like until you taste it, that is, until you have entered inside it. It is something like this, something analogous to this.

Or maybe as in a watch — note that it is just to try to make myself understood, it is not really like that, it is only to try to make myself understood — when you see a watch, you see a dial and the hands moving, but if you want to know the watch you must open it and see the working inside.

It is something like that — you see only the effect, here; there is a cause behind. It is somewhat like that.

The world as we see it and our outer consciousness are the result of something which is behind, which Sri Aurobindo calls the subliminal. And this itself, as he says, is set in motion by impulses which come from the subconscious below and the superconscious above, and so it is as though it were assembled there, and once it is organised there it is expressed in the outer consciousness, the ordinary consciousness.

The best way is to go there; once you go there you understand what it is. And it is not difficult; one goes there constantly in dreams, very easily, without any effort.

How can we understand that we have gone there?

If you remember, you understand. If one remembers the kind of difference of impression one had: one has a certain impression, and when one returns one feels something like a disconnection, the impression is different, even the point of view one had about

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things is different. Well, if one remembers this, one understands. If one is in the habit, one can even while speaking or doing something, perceive very well—above all when speaking or thinking or reflecting on something—a second layer which is behind, much vaster, in which things are organised much more synthetically (not positively understandable) than in the outer consciousness. If one reflects just a little and looks at oneself thinking, one can see this at the back very well, one can see the two things moving together like this (*gesture*)... like the formulated thought and the source of the thought which is behind. And then when one thinks, you see, one has a feeling of being like this, enclosed in something; whereas, there, immediately one feels that one is in contact with many other things; and it is much greater.

Sweet Mother, what should true psychology be like?

True psychology, what do you mean by true psychology?

Because we said...

Sri Aurobindo says that this is not true psychology, he says that modern psychology has no knowledge. True psychology would be a psychology which has knowledge.

Psychology means... What is the precise meaning of *logos*? It is knowing, science; and *psyche* means soul. So it means the science of the soul or the science of the psychic, you see. This is the original sense. Now one has made of that the knowledge of all the inner movements, of all feelings, all the inner movements which are not purely physical movements, you see, all that concerns the feelings, thoughts, even the sensations in their subtlety. But true psychology is the knowledge of the soul, that is, the knowledge of the psychic being. And if one has the knowledge of the psychic being, one has at the same time the knowledge of all the true movements of the being, the inner laws of the being.

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This is true psychology but it is the etymological meaning of the word, not as it is used nowadays.

Why is it less easy for oneself to go down into the lower parts of nature than to bring down the light?

Oh! Is it about that? These are theories, you know. Is this what I read this evening?

No, Sweet Mother, last time... "Easier!"... I made a mistake. It is "easier"...

Ah! Good. So, re-read the sentence clearly.

Why is it easier for oneself to go down into the lower parts of nature than to bring down the light...

Is it written like that?

I don't know.

You can't find it?

It is perhaps the other way...

Perhaps the other way!...

It is not written here.

It is not written? Then where did you pick it up?

"If you go down into your lower parts or ranges of nature, you must be always careful to keep a vigilant connection with..."

But there's no question about its being easier or more difficult. What does she want to say?

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(Pavitra) *There is a paragraph: "If you go down into your lower parts or ranges of nature, you must be always careful to keep a vigilant connection with the higher... levels of the consciousness," etc. Then later: "The safest way is to remain in the higher part of the consciousness and put a pressure from it on the lower to change."*

Yes, but this has no connection with what you were asking.

The safest way is precisely not to go down, it is to remain above and from there to put a pressure on what is below. But if you go down it is very difficult to keep the contact with what is above; so if one forgets one can do nothing, one becomes like the part into which one has gone down. So, as it is something very difficult to do, on the contrary, it is better to remain in one's higher consciousness and from there act upon the lower movements without going down into them.

For example, it is as when one feels anger rising up from the subconscious; well, if one wants to control it one must be very careful not to be identified with it. One must not go down into it. One must remain in one's consciousness, above, quiet, peaceful, and from there look at this anger and put the light and quietude upon it so that it calms down and vanishes. But if one gets identified with it, one is also in anger, one can't change it.

Anything? Nothing! Nowhere. Nobody has anything to say? Nothing! Up there? No? That's all? You are all convinced? Good, then we'll stop, if everyone is convinced.

(*To the child who had asked the question*) You had something else to ask? Oh! She had prepared a heap of questions. But not like that one! You must at least understand the text before asking. Now, what is your other question?

It is about what you read last time: "the higher already regenerated levels of the consciousness" which are spoken about.

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Yes, and so?

I don't understand.

What don't you understand? You don't know what "regenerated" means?

Yes, to reproduce what was...

Regenerated means transformed, made perfect, and purified, enlightened. And then it is a question, there, of all the levels of consciousness, from the most material to the most subtle. So in these planes of consciousness there are parts which are more enlightened than others.

And so, what is your question? You want to know which parts of your being are more enlightened?

Yes.

Ah! Let us see. We could play a little game like this:

Which part of the being in everyone has a more total faith in the divine Grace?

The psychic.

Ah, no! I am speaking of an experience, I am not speaking of a verbal knowledge. I am speaking... which is the part in everyone of you in which you have the greatest faith in the divine Grace? It can be in the physical, it can be in the vital, it can be in the psychic, and it can be in this part or that, or this activity or that other. There are people, for example, who have absolutely a kind of mental realisation of contact with the Grace, of faith in the Grace; and then, as soon as they are in their vital or physical consciousness, there is nothing any more. There are others, on the contrary, who, even physically, in their body... who perhaps

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don't have much mental knowledge, but who in their physical consciousness have an absolute faith in the divine Grace, and a total trust, and they live like that in this faith and trust. Others still have it only in their deep feelings; and their thoughts are vagabond. And there are others who have even a vital faith — these are rare but they exist — who have a vital faith in the divine Grace, that all will always go absolutely well — with a considerable sense of power.

But haven't you ever lent yourself to this little exercise, to see? First, have you faith in the divine Grace?

Yes.

Yes! Good, that's already good. And where then, in which part of your being? Is it in your thought, is it in your feelings, is it in your sensations, is it in your physical activity? If it is everywhere at the same time, you are perfect beings, and I congratulate you.

Sensations.

Sensations? You have a sensation of this? Then you are a very rare person! (*Laughter*)

No, it is in the feeling.

Ah, the feeling, that's different. Usually it is in the feeling, but there are people who have it first in thought, who have a kind of mental knowledge, and then that's all, it stops there. And some people have the feeling and don't have the mental experience, their mind is like that...

Can't it be like this, that sometimes one has a feeling in oneself and another time it is the thought?

This is another phenomenon. It means that this faith, this trust in the divine Grace is in the psychic — behind, there, like that, in the

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psychic, always there. So sometimes it is the feeling, sometimes it is the thought, sometimes even it is the body which is in contact with the psychic, under the influence of the psychic even without knowing it; and at that moment this kind of trust, of faith comes in front like that and supports. This happens when one has momentary contacts with his psychic. For example, when you find yourself in a very great difficulty or a very great physical danger, and suddenly feel this, this force coming into you, the force of a faith, an absolute trust in the divine Grace which helps you. So it means that there is a conscious contact with one's psychic and it comes to help you — it is a special grace bestowed. This is the condition which ought to be the most frequent here, for this contact is established all the time, consciously, deliberately, in everyone. So this instance ought to be the most frequent, it is the most normal — here. That is, according to the part which is active or according to the necessity of the moment, it is here or there or there that suddenly you feel this trust which takes possession of you and guards you. It is like that.

There we are!

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This talk is based upon *Bases of Yoga*, Chapter 5, “Physical Consciousness, etc.”.

Now, has anyone any questions?

Sweet Mother, here it is written: “I find it difficult to take these psycho-analysts at all seriously...”

It means that he is laughing at them, simply that.

(The child continues reading) “... *when they try to scrutinise spiritual experience by the flicker of...*”

“... of their torch-lights”. It is a joke; it’s to say that it is a very tiny light of nothing at all and that they think they can judge spiritual experiences with this light which is no better than a small torch-light; it means something that has no strength. It is a joke.

But what did you want to ask?

Here, “spiritual experience by the flicker of their torch-lights”...

Yes, that’s it, it means that they want to judge spiritual experiences with a very tiny light which is worthless, which has no strength, a torch-light, a torch-lamp, it is nothing at all. These people want to explain everything by the most material and most ordinary phenomena of human life; and they want to explain everything, including the creation and all the higher phenomena by the help of all the small physical habits of the most ordinary consciousness. It is absolutely ridiculous.

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Sweet Mother, what is a “super-ego”?

A super-ego means an ego that's enlarged, swollen, made more important, even, than it can be... This whole letter is full of mockery. Super-ego means an ego that's still more of an ego than an ordinary ego, something swollen, something which tries to be very big while being nothing at all.

But why an “underground super-ego”?

Underground, yes, it means something hidden, that's very low down in the consciousness, far below, very low down. “Underground” gives the impression of something that's in a great darkness, lower down, hidden in the shadow: the most material movements — an ego that tries to become an important person.

Sweet Mother, sometimes we dream of ordinary things, but sometimes we have dreams which are not...

Yes, that's what Sri Aurobindo says, doesn't he? He says that all dreams are not ordinary dreams, associations of memories, that there are dreams which are revelations. He describes all kinds and types of dreams here.

Mother, does this depend on the day? If one is more conscious in the day, one will have dreams of a good kind?

It is very difficult to say on what it depends.

It happens that when you need to dream of something, so that it may enlighten you on a point of your nature, give you an indication about the effort you must make, it comes.

It depends perhaps on a consciousness that watches over everyone; and provided one is just a little open, it can guide him and give sure indications.

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I think there is an entire category of dreams which are absolutely commonplace, useless and simply tiring, which one can avoid if, before going to sleep, one makes a little effort of concentration, tries to put himself in contact with what is best in him, by either an aspiration or a prayer, and to sleep only after this is done... even, if one likes, try to meditate and pass quite naturally from meditation into sleep without even realising it... Usually there is a whole category of dreams which are useless, tiring, which prevent you from resting well — all this might be avoided. And then, if one has truly succeeded well in his concentration, it is quite possible that one may have, at night, not exactly dreams but experiences of which one becomes conscious and which are very useful, indications, as I just told you, indications about questions you asked yourself and of which you did not have the answers; or else a set of circumstances where you ought to take a decision and don't know what decision to take; or else some way of being of your own character which does not show itself to you clearly in the waking consciousness — because you are so accustomed to it that you are not aware of it — but something that harms your development and obscures your consciousness, and which appears to you in a symbolic revelatory dream, and you become clearly aware of the thing, then you can act upon it.

It depends not on what one was during the day, because this doesn't always have much effect upon the night, but on the way one has gone to sleep. It is enough just to have at the moment of sleeping a sincere aspiration that the night, instead of being a darkening of the consciousness, may be a help to understand something, to have an experience; and then, though it doesn't come always, it has a chance of coming.

There is also, you know, a whole lot of activities of the night which one doesn't remember at all. Sometimes when one has awakened quite slowly and quietly, when one hasn't jumped up while awakening, when one wakes up quite gently, quite slowly, without stirring, one has a vague impression of something that

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has happened which has left an imprint on one's consciousness — you have your own way of waking up — particular, sometimes even strange. And so if you remain very quiet and observe attentively, without moving, you notice a kind of half-memory of an activity that took place at night, and if you remain concentrated on it, still motionless for some time, suddenly it may come back like that, like something that appears from behind a veil, and you can get hold of the tail of a dream. When you hold the tail — just a little event — when you hold the tail, you pull it, like this, very gently, and it comes. But you must be very quiet and must not move. And usually these dreams are very interesting; these activities are very instructive.

One does lots and lots of things at night which one doesn't know, and if one learns, you see, when one becomes conscious, one can begin to have control. Before being conscious you have no control at all. But when you begin to be conscious, you can also begin to have a control. And then if you have control of your activities of the night, you can sleep much better; for the fact that when you wake up you are often at least as tired as when going to bed and have a feeling of lassitude shows that you do any number of useless things during the night; you tire yourself running around in the vital worlds or moving in the mind in a frantic activity. So when you get up you feel tired.

Well, once you have the control you can stop that completely... stop it before going to sleep... make yourself like a vast sea, that is, it is completely calm and still and vast... well, you can make your mind like that, vast, calm, like a flat, motionless surface; then your sleep is excellent.

Of course, here too it is a question of people going in their sleep to places of the vital worlds which are very bad, and then, when they return, sometimes they are more than tired, at times they are ill, or they are absolutely exhausted. This is because they were in bad places and had a fight. But this surely has something to do with the state of the consciousness during the

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waking hours. If, for example, you have been angry during the day, you see, there are many chances that at night you will be in a vital fight for some time. This happens.

That's all? Nothing?

What is "the heavenly archetype of the lotus"?

It means the primal idea of the lotus.

Each thing that is expressed physically was conceived somewhere before being realised materially.

There is an entire world which is the world of the fashioners, where all conceptions are made. And this world is very high, much higher than all the worlds of the mind; and from there these formations, these creations, these types which have been conceived by the fashioners come down and are expressed in physical realisations. And there is always a great distance between the perfection of the idea and what is materialised. Very often the materialised things are like caricatures in comparison with the primal idea. This is what he calls the archetype. This takes place in worlds... not always the same ones, it depends on the things; but for many things in the physical, the primal ideas, these archetypes, were in what Sri Aurobindo calls the Overmind.

But there is a still higher domain than this where the origins are still purer, and if one reaches this, attains this, one finds the absolutely pure types of what is manifested upon earth. And then it is very interesting to compare, to see to what an extent earthly creation is a frightful distortion. And moreover, it is only when one can reach these regions and see the reality of things in their essence that one can work with knowledge to transform them here; otherwise on what can we take our stand to conceive a better world, more perfect, more beautiful than the existing one? It can't be on our imagination which is itself something very poor and very material. But if one can enter that consciousness, rise right up to these higher worlds of creation, then with this

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in one's consciousness one can work at making material things take their real form.

Mother, at night if one sees someone dying, and a few months later one sees again the same person dying, what does it mean? Is this person in danger?

In a dream, one sees a person... and a few months later one sees him again?...

Yes, dying.

One sees a person dying and then some months later one sees him dying a second time, the same person! He is dead or alive?

Alive.

This is becoming disquieting, my child! I don't know; it depends absolutely upon the case.

It can be a spiritual death, it can be a vital death, it can be the death of something in the being which ought to disappear (and then it means a progress), it can be a premonition, it can be lots of things. Unless you have the context of your dream one can't explain it. But you should have what we could call a jurisprudence of your dreams. You have never compared the dream with the events which occur?... for example, hasn't it happened to you—I know it has—that you see someone dying and this person really dies? But you don't see him dying again a second time. If you see the same dream twice, it means one of two things: either that he has lost once more another state of being, you see, that he has entered a vital consciousness or later from this vital consciousness he has gone out to enter a psychic consciousness. It can be that. But then there are sure signs. The dream cannot deceive you, and it cannot be similar. Or it may be simply that there was

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something which was profoundly impressed in the thought, in the brain, and that in certain circumstances which can have many causes... yet in certain circumstances... this impression begins to be active again and gives you the same dream once more. If it is an identical dream, it can be this, just a cerebral phenomenon.

Many dreams are just phenomena of the brain, that is, of things which go into activity again under some stimulus or other and bring back the same pictures, sometimes exactly the same, sometimes with slightly different associations and connections; so there are differences.

At times some dreams are repeated, you know, often dreams which are lessons or indications, dreams which announce something to you or want to draw your attention to something or put you on your guard against something. Very often it happens that they recur either at brief intervals or at a certain distance. And usually it means that the first time the impression was very faint, one doesn't remember it well. The third time or even after the second, one has a vague impression already: "Why! This isn't the first time", when one sees it. Then the third time it is clear, precise, absolute, and one remembers: "Ah, I have already seen this thrice!"

Usually these dreams are extremely interesting and give you precise indications: either about something to be done or something not to be done, or about precautions to be taken or perhaps about your relations with someone, what you should expect to receive from a person, how you should act towards him or in certain circumstances.

You see it is quite a small detail, a very small detail which recurs in this way; sometimes it comes immediately: one night, the second night, the third night; sometimes it takes weeks to recur.

Sweet Mother, to profit by one's nights, to have good dreams, is it necessary that one should have done nothing

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very intellectual late at night, or that one should not eat too late at night or do anything external?

This depends on each one; but certainly if you want to sleep quietly at night, you must not study till just before sleeping. If you read something which requires concentration, your head will continue to work and so you won't sleep well. When the mind continues working one doesn't rest.

The ideal, you see, is to enter an integral repose, that is, immobility in the body, perfect peace in the vital, absolute silence in the mind — and the consciousness goes out of all activity to enter into *Sachchidananda*. If you can do this, then when you wake up you get up with the feeling of an extraordinary power, a perfect joy. But it is not very, very easy to do this. It can be done; this is the ideal condition.

Usually it is not at all like this, and most of the time almost all the hours of sleep are wasted in some kind of disordered activities; your body begins to toss about in your bed, you give kicks, you turn, you start, you turn this way and that, and then you do this (*gesture*) and then this... So you don't rest at all.

During the day we have no time, so we are compelled to prepare the lessons at night.

Oh, there are always fifty thousand reasons for doing things! You must not at all introduce a moral question there. You can do your duty, and in an absolutely... unselfish way, and still it can prevent you from sleeping all the same.

Moral issues have nothing to do with the inner development. I am sorry to tell you this, but one goes one way, the other another. You can make yourself completely ill by doing something absolutely... how to put it?... unselfish, you see, which has nothing selfish about it, and you can be very healthy while being absolutely selfish. That does not come in the way. It is not this kind of morality which is effective.

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There is a great difference between having a moral conscience and a consciousness which is the expression of truth. But I must say that it is infinitely more difficult to have a consciousness which expresses the truth than to have a moral conscience, because any fool who knows the social rules and follows them has a moral conscience, while to have a consciousness of truth one must not be an idiot — in any case, it's the first condition!

This is how I have been wasting my nights for more than a year!

Yes. But don't you think that all these things are the result of a lack of organisation in your life? One lives from moment to moment, as things come, anyhow. Or else one makes some effort of mental organisation which does not at all correspond to the truth and therefore is thwarted every minute.

But if one organised his life in accordance with a higher principle of consciousness and without the groping one usually tries, that is, with a precise indication at every minute of what is to be done and how it is to be done, I think that one could so manage that things don't become awkwardly difficult. It is very good to be a good teacher, but perhaps it is not absolutely necessary to correct all the homework just at the time one is going to bed. I don't know, you see, because I was never a good teacher, so I never prepared the exercises for my students, never corrected the homework of my students. But still, it seems to me this ought to be quite possible.

Usually, instead of choosing one's work very carefully and taking exactly what one can do and doing it as well as one can, very often one takes too much. And in this too much there are many things which are at least partially useless, which could be considerably reduced, without harming the result (note that I am not making a general rule of it, it is only an experience I have); and when one is very attentive to the inner indication and refuses to be tossed by the waves that come from outside —

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these waves are of all kinds of movements arising from the wills of others or from a kind of routine of circumstances or from oppositions coming from forces which are not very favourable — so, instead of being pushed like that and moved by these things, if one receives a very clear, very precise inner indication and follows it without equivocating, you see, without any hesitation, a little strictly — indeed, if it doesn't please others, so much the worse for them — well, it happens that one becomes in a way the master of circumstances, that they are organised favourably, and that one does much more work in much less time.

There's a way of reducing the time necessary for doing things by increasing the concentration considerably. Some people can't do this for long, it tires them; but it's like weightlifting, isn't it, one can get accustomed to it. And then, if you can succeed in mastering this power of concentration and in making your mind absolutely still — for this indeed is the first condition — and if in this quietude you concentrate it, concentrate, concentrate, concentrate on the point you want to make, on the work you have to do or the action you have to perform, well, you can... it comes like a kind of extremely quiet but all-powerful force of propulsion, and you go forward with one movement... without hesitation you can literally do in a quarter of an hour what would otherwise take one hour. And so this has the great advantage that it gives you time and that after this, instead of going from one activity to another, from one agitation to another, you can relax completely for some minutes and have a total rest. This gives you time to rest; and in this repose, naturally, as you are relaxed, all that could have been a little too tense is relaxed and put in order, and this puts you back in a condition in which you are once again able to make another concentration. Try!

There. That's all? No questions?

Then *au revoir*, my children.

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This talk is based upon *Bases of Yoga*, Chapter 5, “Physical Consciousness, etc.”.

Sweet Mother, what is the difference between a symbolic dream and a vision?

Usually one has a vision when one is not asleep, when one is awake. When one is awake and enters within oneself — whether in meditation or concentration — one has visions. Or at night you can't sleep... remain stretched out, remain quiet, don't sleep and you may have visions.

Dreams come when one is asleep, that is, when one has no longer the waking consciousness; whereas in vision one is in the waking consciousness, but one quietens or immobilises it, and it is another more inner consciousness which awakens; yet one is not asleep, the body is not asleep, it is just made quiet.

One can have visions even while remaining active. Some people have visions even amidst activity. Vision is another plane of perception which awakes. It is the senses in the mind or vital or physical which wake up and manage to pass their experiences to the outer consciousness. It is as though one had another pair of eyes behind these, eyes which could see in the vital instead of seeing in the physical. And this is always there. Only, as one is concentrated on the most material life, one doesn't notice it. But some children have the two conjointly, they see even physically all kinds of things which are not physical. Usually they are told that they are saying stupid things; so they stop speaking about them. But they don't see just this, only physically, they see other things behind. One can have visions with closed eyes, one can

¹ No class was held on the 20th of April.

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have visions with open eyes; while when dreaming one is always asleep.

Any other questions?

How can we distinguish between a symbolic dream and other dreams?

For each one it is different; but it is a question of the impression one has. Usually the symbolic dream is much clearer, more precise, more coordinated, and carries with it a kind of consciousness of something which is true... I don't know... one remembers it better, it is not distorted in the remembrance.

And then, that's all?

Sweet Mother, there's a question of Jyotindra's.

Ah! What does he want to know, that child?

He wanted to know: when one is in much pain or is very irritated, how can one sleep peacefully?

This indeed needs a certain yogic power. The best way — and this one is absolute — is to go out of one's body.

When the body is in pain, when one has fever or is ill, you see, or the body is very ill, the only thing to do is to come out of it, to bring out one's vital being. And then, if one is a yogi and knows, one rises just above — so as to see his body; the vital being, if it has come out in a fairly material form, can see the body; one sees his own physical body, and then at that moment, with the consciousness one has and the force one has, one can direct the rays of these forces on the place in the body which is ill. But this of course is the peak, it is the surest way of curing oneself; and if one has the power and the knowledge, it is infallible.

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One can cure oneself of anything whatever in a very short time. Only, all this means a great practice, a training of the being. It does not come all at once, you see. But in fact when the pain is intolerable and people faint, they do this instinctively. To faint is to go out of one's body. So some people, who are not too closely tied to their body, when something goes wrong, becomes too painful or is not all right, they faint.

Too great a pain makes you faint away, that is, you go out of your body, you really go out and leave the body very inert; and provided someone is there who has enough knowledge not to shake you like this (*gesture*) to wake you up, it is a means of escape from suffering. Of course, if you have beside you someone who is panic-stricken and sprinkles cold water on your head or shakes you, then the result can be disastrous, but otherwise one can... And little by little, naturally, as there is no longer any consciousness there to record the suffering, it becomes calm, and in almost every case the body becomes motionless enough to be able to rest even in spite of the suffering. It doesn't feel it at all any longer. This is the best way.

There are minor methods and they have smaller results; they are not very easy either, that is, the knowledge of the power to cut the connection between the suffering part and the recording brain. One cuts the connection, then the brain does not register. That's what one does, what the doctors do with anaesthetics. They cut the connection of the nerves between the spot that's ill and the brain; so the brain no longer perceives anything or it is reduced to a minimum. And it always comes back to the same thing, one way or another; and all this calls for an occult power or a training. Some people have it spontaneously; there are not many of these — very few. But obviously, without going so far, there is one thing that one can try to do: it is not to concentrate on one's pain, to turn the attention away as much as possible, not think at all of one's pain, think as little as possible and above all not be concentrated on it, not to pay attention — “Oh, I'm in pain”, then it becomes a little worse; “Oh, I'm in

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still greater pain”, then it becomes still worse, like that, because one is concentrated on it; and this is the mistake one always makes: to think, be there, attentive, awaiting the sign of pain; then naturally it comes, it comes increased by the concentration of the attention given to it. That is why, when one is not well the best thing to do is to read or have something read, you see; it depends on the condition one is in. But if one can turn one’s attention away, one no longer suffers.

And so, that’s all?

Sweet Mother, do we need to dream?

Do we what?...

... need to dream?...

Need to dream! But it’s not a question of need, my child, one always dreams.

But why do we dream?

Why do you walk on your feet, with the head in the air, and why do you eat and sleep? It is like that. There is no why about it. There is no why, it is part of the general functioning.

Dreams are not something imposed upon you like that, artificially. It is not as when you are sent to school to learn something, not like that. They are a part of your normal working, that is, usually it is the head, the brain which goes on working. Sometimes, when one is in slightly higher states, it is an inner being that enters into activity, goes to its own domain and lives there its own life. But all these things are not artificially organised for some reason or other. They are a part of the body’s functioning. Dreams are as natural as the activities of the day; and then in a dream one finds out more or less that one understands nothing about it, but in life it’s exactly the same thing because

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—no matter what happens—you are always asking yourself hundreds of questions to know why, how and what it is that's happened. You know nothing about it. Only, you are in the habit of its being like that.

That's all. No questions?

I have a question still.

Still one?

Sweet Mother, when one sleeps the consciousness is different from the waking consciousness...

Yes, and so "Why?" (*Laughter*)

How is it different?

But you have never noticed that it is different? For example, your physical consciousness or your subtle physical consciousness, your vital consciousness or the consciousness of your higher or lower vital, your psychic consciousness, your mental consciousness, each one is completely different! So when you sleep you have one consciousness, and when you are awake you have another. In your waking state you look at things projected outside you, in your sleep state you see them interiorised. So it is as though in one case you were pushed altogether outside yourself, in front, and in the other it is as though you were looking at yourself in an inner mirror.

Don't understand? Not very well!

Well, it's something one must learn to distinguish, one's states of consciousness, because otherwise one lives in a perpetual confusion.

In fact, it is the first step on the path, it is the beginning of the thread, if one doesn't hold on to the end of the thread, one is lost on the way. This is only to hold the end of the thread.

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That's all?

*Sweet Mother, when one sees oneself dead in a dream,
what does it signify?*

Ah! I have already been asked this several times. It depends on the context.

It can mean that one has made enough progress to get rid totally of an old way of being which has no longer any reason for existing. This, I think, is the most frequent case. Otherwise it depends absolutely on the context, that is, the circumstances surrounding the dream.

That is... one sees himself dead... How does he see himself dead? Does he simply see the inert body or himself already dead, or does he take for dead what is not dead?

You see, if you leave your body — by going out of the body as I explained a while ago — if you have gone out materially enough, in a very material vital, well, the body which is lying on the bed seems absolutely dead, but it is not dead for all that. But if you look at it or see it while you are outside and you don't know, it seems absolutely dead, it is in a cataleptic state. Then if you know what is necessary and what you ought to do it is very easy; but if you don't know and the imagination starts roaming, then you open the door to fear and anything may happen.

But in fact, I don't think that once in a million times it is a premonitory dream. I think it much more likely that it is a fragment of the being which has stopped being useful and so disappears; so the fragment takes the form of the whole and one sees himself dead because this fragment has stopped existing in him. This is the most frequent and the most logical instance.

Now, one may see not a death but, for example, an accident or an assassination or things like that... Then it is a very real violent dream, you know, and this may mean that one is attacked by bad forces sent by someone with a precise purpose. Then one has only to strike hard and react violently.

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Sweet Mother, sometimes when one is asleep, he knows that he is asleep but he can't open his eyes. Why?

This happens when one has gone out of his body, and one must not force things, one must quite simply, slowly, concentrate his consciousness in his body and wait a while for the fusion to be made normally; one must not force things.

Sometimes the eyes are a little open and one can also see things...

And one can't move!

Yes.

It means that only a fragment of the consciousness has come back, not enough to bring back the full movement in the body. You must not shake yourself, because you risk losing a bit of yourself. You must remain quite still and concentrate slowly, slowly, on your body; it can take a minute or two at the most.

What can one lose?

Anything at all, something that has gone out, you see. It's because one part of the being has gone out; so if you shake yourself, it doesn't have the time to get back. Why, there's someone behind you (*Nolini*) who has had an experience of this kind — someone startled him out of his sleep, and when he came back he had truly the feeling that something was missing. Isn't that so? (*Mother turns to Nolini*)

(*Nolini*) Yes.

Then I told him to concentrate quietly; it came back. Only, if one is afraid it can become complicated, you see.

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But one must never startle anyone out of his sleep because he must have time to get back into his body. It is not good, for instance, when getting up to jump out of bed — hop! You must remain quiet for a while, like this (*gesture*), as though you were bringing yourself back into yourself, like that, quietly... quietly. When you are quite calm, when you feel that everything is there, then you get up and it is over. But you must never jump out of bed abruptly, it is not good. Besides, sometimes it happens that those who wake up abruptly and jump out of bed feel giddy and risk falling. You must always make a movement like this (*gesture*), as though you were gathering your consciousness or all kinds of things which may be gathered in one's body; you remain very quiet for a few seconds of assimilation and when it is done properly, you get up quietly, composedly.

What else? Nothing?

So it is finished!

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This talk is based upon *Bases of Yoga*, Chapter 5, “Physical Consciousness, etc.”.

Sweet Mother, how can one draw on “the universal vital Force”?

One can do it in many ways.

First of all, you must know that it exists and that one can enter into contact with it. Secondly, you must try to make this contact, to feel it circulating everywhere, through everything, in all persons and all circumstances; to have this experience, for example, when you are in the countryside among trees, to see it circulating in the whole of Nature, in trees and things, and then commune with it, feel yourself close to it, and each time you want to deal with it, recall that impression you had and try to enter into contact.

Some people discover that with certain movements, certain gestures, certain activities, they enter into contact more closely. I knew people who gesticulated while walking... this truly gave them the impression that they were in contact — certain gestures they made while walking... But children do this spontaneously: when they give themselves completely in their games, running, playing, jumping, shouting; when they spend all their energies like that, they give themselves entirely, and in the joy of playing and moving and running they put themselves in contact with this universal vital force; they don't know it, but they spend their vital force in a contact with the universal vital force and that is why they can run without really feeling very tired, except after a very long time. That is, they spend so much that if they were not in contact with the universal force, they would be absolutely exhausted, immediately. And that is why, besides, they grow up;

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it is also because they receive more than they spend; they know how to receive more than they spend. And this does not correspond to any knowledge. It is a natural, spontaneous movement. It is the movement... a movement of joy in what they are doing — of joyful expenditure. One can do many things with that.

I knew young people who had always lived in cities — in a city and in those little rooms one has in the big cities in which everyone is huddled. Now, they had come to spend their holidays in the countryside, in the south of France, and there the sun is hot, naturally not as here but all the same it is very hot (when we compare the sun of the Mediterranean coasts with that of Paris, for example, it truly makes a difference), and so, when they walked around the countryside the first few days they really began to get a terrible headache and to feel absolutely uneasy because of the sun; but they suddenly thought: “Why, if we make friends with the sun it won’t harm us any more!” And they began to make a kind of inner effort of friendship and trust in the sun, and when they were out in the sun, instead of trying to bend double and tell themselves, “Oh! How hot it is, how it burns!”, they said, “Oh, how full of force and joy and love the sun is!” etc., they opened themselves like this (*gesture*), and not only did they not suffer any longer but they felt so strong afterwards that they went round telling everyone who said “It is hot” — telling them “Do as we do, you will see how good it is.” And they could remain for hours in the full sun, bare-headed and without feeling any discomfort. It is the same principle.

It is the same principle. They linked themselves to the universal vital force which is in the sun and received this force which took away all that was unpleasant to them.

When one is in the countryside, when one walks under the trees and feels so close to Nature, to the trees, the sky, all the leaves, all the branches, all the herbs, when one feels a great friendship with these things and breathes that air which is so good, perfumed with all the plants, then one opens oneself, and

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by opening oneself communes with the universal forces. And for all things it is like that.

Can one do the same thing when it is cold?

Yes, I think so. I think one can always do the same thing in all cases.

The sun is a very powerful symbol in the organisation of Nature. So it is not altogether the same thing; it possesses in itself an extraordinary condensation of energy. Cold seems to me a more negative thing: it is an absence of something. But in any case, if one knows how to enter the rhythm of the movements of Nature, one avoids many discomforts. What makes men suffer, what disturbs the balance of the body is a narrowness, it is always a narrowness. It happens because one is shut up in limits, and so there is, as Sri Aurobindo writes here, a force which presses too strongly for these limits — it upsets everything.

Sweet Mother, what is “the inner physical”?

Well, the other day we had this question in connection with the subliminal. It is the same thing, you see.

The outer physical, what we see of the body, the appearance is, so to say, supported, upheld by a kind of inner existence and substance, which is expressed through the outer thing. You feel this clearly when something from outside hits you, and it is not pleasant; then when you draw back from that, you recoil from that contact with circumstances or things; well, the first impression is of drawing back inside into your physical being itself, a physical being which is there, which presses, so to say, on the outer form in order to create a new form.

This is what makes children grow up, it is a kind of inner thing which pushes, pushes for action, pushes for movement, pushes for progress. But it is physical, it is not a vital or mental consciousness, it is purely physical. It is something which pushes

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from within towards manifestation and is concentrated and channelled in the manifestation. It is vaster and more imprecise within. It is what Sri Aurobindo calls “the inner physical”. It is more vague, more imprecise. One can dream there. For example, one dreams, one sees a room, one’s own room. Well, it is one’s own room but still there are little differences; it is not absolutely what one sees with his two eyes when he is completely awake. It is a physical vision but with just a little shade of difference; compared with the most material there are slight changes.

That’s all?

Sweet Mother, do the universal vital forces have any limits?

I don’t think that forces have a limit, because in comparison with us they are certainly unlimited. But it’s our capacity of reception that is limited. We cannot absorb them beyond a certain measure, and then we must keep a balance between the expenditure and the capacity to receive. If one spends suddenly in a kind of impulse — for example, in an impulsive movement — if one spends much more than one has received, one needs a brief moment of concentration, calm, receptivity to absorb universal forces. You must put yourself in a certain condition to receive them; and then, they last for a certain time, and once you have spent them you must begin again to receive them. It is in this sense that there are limits. It isn’t the forces that are limited, it is the receptivity.

Each person has a different receptivity. No two receptivities are the same in quality and quantity, but specially in quality. One enters into contact with very pure, very intense forces — what could be already called converted forces, that is, universal vital forces which are in contact with the Divine and not only receive the Divine but aspire to receive Him. So if you absorb these forces it gives you a great strength for progress. It is in this that the quality is much more important. And for the quality of

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the universal vital forces, it depends naturally a great deal on what one is, but also much on what one does.

If one uses these forces for a purely selfish action of a base kind, well, one makes it almost totally impossible for himself to receive any new ones of as fine a quality. All depends on the utilisation of the forces one receives. If, on the other hand, you use them to make progress, to perfect yourself, it gives you... it increases your capacity of receiving enormously, and the next time you can have a lot more. All depends (in any case, principally) on the use made of them. There are people, for instance, who are short-tempered by nature and haven't succeeded in controlling their anger. Well, if with an aspiration or by some method or other they have managed to receive some higher vital forces, instead of this calming their irritation or anger... because they have no self-control it increases their anger, that is, their irritability, their movement of violence is full of a greater force, a greater energy, and becomes much more violent. So it is well said that to be in contact with universal forces does not make one progress. But this is because they make a bad use of them. Yet naturally in the long run, this bad use diminishes the capacity of receiving; but it takes time, it is not immediate. So it is very important to put yourself in a good condition to receive the higher forces and not the lower ones, and secondly, when you have received them use them for the best thing possible, in order to prepare yourself to receive those which are of a higher quality. But if you open yourself, receive the forces and afterwards, being satisfied with having received them you let yourself fall into all the ordinary movements, well, you close the door and the force no longer returns.

One can increase the receptivity also?...

How can we increase the receptivity? By progressing.

One must first know how to open himself and then, in a great quietude know how to assimilate the forces one has

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received, not to throw them out again. One must know how to assimilate them.

So the progress lies in a normal but progressive equilibrium, periods of assimilation — reception, assimilation — and periods of expenditure, and knowing how to balance the two, and alternate them in a rhythm which is your personal one. You must not go beyond your capacity, you must not remain below it, because the universal vital forces are not something which you could put into a strong box. They must circulate. So you must know how to receive and at the same time to spend, but to increase the capacity of reception so as to have more and more of the things which are to be used up, to be spent. Besides, this is what happens, as I said, this is what happens quite naturally with children. They begin, make a certain effort, receive a certain force spontaneously, assimilate it and then after a few days, two days, ten days, twenty days they can spend more. After a year they can do much more, because quite naturally they alternate the reception and the expenditure, and they progress in their stature. They of course do it unconsciously, but when one is older it becomes more difficult; one stops growing up, for example. So this means that there's a certain period of expansion which has stopped. But it can be prolonged, then, with an inner discipline, a method one finds: it has to be one's own method.

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This talk is based upon *Bases of Yoga*, Chapter 5, “Physical Consciousness, etc.”.

Who is going to ask questions today?

Sweet Mother, how can we make the body immune to every attack?

Well, Sri Aurobindo has written it later, hasn't he? He says that only the descent of the supramental Force can make the body immune to every attack. He says that otherwise it is only momentary and that it doesn't always work. He says that it can be practically immune but not absolutely so; and to be absolutely so, it is only by transforming the nature as it is into a supramental nature that one can make the body absolutely immune to all attacks.

Sweet Mother, is the subconscious stronger than the mind, vital and physical?

What do you mean by stronger?

Here it is written...

It has a greater power. Well, just because it is subconscious it is everywhere, everything seems steeped in the subconscious. And so, “subconscious” means half conscious: not conscious and not unconscious. It is just between the two; it is like that, half-way; so things slide down into it, one doesn't know that they are there, and from there they act; and it is because one doesn't know that they are there that they can remain there. There are many things

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which one doesn't wish to keep and drives out from the active consciousness, but they go down there, hide there, and because it is subconscious one doesn't notice them; but they haven't gone out completely, and when they have a chance to come up again, they come up. For example, there are bad habits of the body, in the sense that the body is in the habit of upsetting its balance — we call that falling ill, you know; but still, the functioning becomes defective through a bad habit. You manage by concentrating the Force and applying it on this defect, to make it disappear but it doesn't disappear completely, it enters the subconscious. And then, when you are off your guard, when you stop paying attention properly and preventing it from showing itself, it rises up and comes out. You thought for months perhaps or even for years, you thought you were completely rid of a certain kind of illness which you suffered from, and you no longer paid any attention, and suddenly one day it returns as though it had never gone; it springs up again from the subconscious and unless one enters into this subconscious and changes things there, that is, unless one changes the subconscious into the conscient, it always happens like this. And the method is to change the subconscious into the conscient — if each thing that rises to the surface becomes conscious, at that moment it must be changed. There is a more direct method still: it is to enter the subconscious in one's full consciousness and work there, but this is difficult. Yet so long as this is not done, all the progress one has made — I mean physically, in one's body — can always be undone.

(Mother turns to a child) You are sleeping? Almost!

No questions?... You? Nothing!

Sweet Mother, when one sees an illness coming, how can one stop it?

Ah! First of all, you must not want it and nothing in the body must want it. You must have a very strong will not to be ill. This is the first condition.

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The second condition is to call the light, a light of equilibrium, a light of peace, quietude and balance, and to push it into all the cells of the body, enjoining them not to be afraid, because that again is another condition.

First, not to want to be ill, and then not to be afraid of illness. You must neither attract it nor tremble. You must not want illness at all. But you must not because of fear not want it; you must not be afraid; you must have a calm certitude and a complete trust in the power of the Grace to shelter you from everything, and then think of something else, not be concerned about this any longer. When you have done these two things, refusing the illness with all your will and infusing a confidence which completely eliminates the fear in the cells of the body, and then busying yourself with something else, not thinking any longer about the illness, forgetting that it exists... there, if you know how to do that, you may even be in contact with people who have contagious diseases, and yet you do not catch them. But you must know how to do this.

Many people say, "Oh, yes, here I am not afraid." They don't have any fear in the mind, their mind is not afraid, it is strong, it is not afraid; but the body trembles, and one doesn't know it, because it is in the cells of the body that the trembling goes on. It trembles with a terrible anxiety and this is what attracts the illness. It is there that you must put the force and the quietude of a perfect peace and an absolute trust in the Grace. And then, sometimes you are obliged to drive away with a similar force in your thought all suggestions that after all, the physical world is full of illnesses, and these are contagious, and because one was in contact with somebody who is ill, one is sure to catch it, and then, that the inner methods are not powerful enough to act on the physical, and all kinds of stupidities of which the air is full. These are collective suggestions which are passed on from one person to another by everybody. And if by chance there are two or three doctors, then it becomes terrible. (*Laughter*)

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When Sri Aurobindo says that illness comes from outside, what exactly is it that comes?

It is a kind of vibration made up of a mental suggestion, a vital force of disorder and certain physical elements which are the materialisation of the mental suggestion and the vital vibration. And these physical elements can be what we have agreed to call germs, microbes, this and that and many other things.

It may be accompanied by a sensation, may be accompanied by a taste, also by a smell, if one has very developed subtle senses. There are these formations of illness which give a special taste to the air, a special smell or a slight special sensation.

People have many senses which are asleep. They are terribly tamasic. If all the senses they possess were awake, there are many things they would perceive, which can just pass by without anyone suspecting anything.

For example, many people have a certain kind of influenza at the moment. It is very wide-spread. Well, when it comes close, it has a special taste, a special smell, and it brings you a certain contact (naturally not like a blow), something a little more subtle, a certain contact, exactly as when you pass your hand over something, backwards over some material... You have never done that? The material has a grain, you know; when you pass your hand in the right direction or when you pass it like this (*gesture*), well, it makes you... it is something that passes over your skin, like this, backwards. But naturally, I can tell you, it doesn't come like a staggering blow. It is very subtle but very clear. So if you see that, you can very easily...

Besides, there is always a way of isolating oneself by an atmosphere of protection, if one knows how to have an extremely quiet vibration, so quiet that it makes almost a kind of wall around you. But all the time, all the time one is vibrating in response to vibrations which come from outside. If you become aware of this, all the time there is something which does this (*gesture*), like this, like this, like this (*gestures*), which

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responds to all the vibrations coming from outside. You are never in an absolutely quiet atmosphere which emanates from you, that is, which comes from inside outward (not something which comes from outside within), something which is like an envelope around you, very quiet, like this — and you can go anywhere at all and these vibrations which come from outside do not begin to do this (*gesture*) around your atmosphere.

If you could see that kind of dance, the dance of vibrations which is there around you all the time, you would see, would understand well what I mean.

For example, in a game, when you play, it is like this (*gesture*), and then it is like the vibrations of a point, it goes on increasing, increasing and increasing until suddenly, crash!... an accident. And it is a collective atmosphere like that; we come and see it, you are in the midst of a game — basketball or football or any other — we feel it, see it, it produces a kind of smoke around you (those vapours of heat which come at times, something like that), and then it takes on a vibration like that, like that, more and more, more and more, more and more until suddenly the equilibrium is broken: someone breaks his leg, falls down, is hit on the mouth by a ball, etc. And one can foretell beforehand that this is going to happen when it is like that. But nobody is aware of it.

Yet, even in less serious cases, each one of you individually has around him something which instead of being this very individual and very calm envelope which protects you from all that you don't want to receive... I mean, your receptivity becomes deliberate and conscious, otherwise you do not receive; and it is only when you have this conscious extremely calm atmosphere, and as I say, when it comes from within (it is not something that comes from outside), it is only when it's like this that you can go with impunity into life, that is, among others and in all the circumstances of every minute...

Otherwise if there is something bad to be caught, for example, anger, fear, an illness, some uneasiness, you are sure to

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catch it. As soon as it starts doing this (*gesture*), it is as though you called all similar vibrations to come and get hold of you.

What is to be wondered at is the unconsciousness with which men go through life; they don't know how to live, there's not one in a million who knows how to live, and they live like that somehow or other, limping along, managing, not managing; and all that for them, bah! What is it? Things that happen.

They don't know how to live. All the same one should learn how to live. That's the first thing one ought to teach children: to learn how to live. I have tried but I don't know if I have succeeded very much. I have told you all these things very often, I think, haven't I? Haven't I?

Yes.

That's all? Still another question?

Sweet Mother, I did not understand the last part.

The last part speaks of the Supermind, doesn't it?

Ah, yes, you mean you did not understand the difference between yogic forces and the supramental nature. But Sri Aurobindo explains it.

I did not understand.

In the outer consciousness, mental and physical — corporal — in order to get a result like the one we were speaking about just now (for example, to have a protective personal atmosphere which can keep you safe from any undesirable contact), you must have the yogic force, that is, the force given by the practice of yoga; whereas if your body were supramentalised, if it had the supramental nature instead of the ordinary physical nature, there would be no need of the intervention of any yogic knowledge or any yogic force to protect you, because you would be quite

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naturally protected by the very fact of this supramental nature. That's what Sri Aurobindo says.

But the supramental nature in the body is something yet to be realised. In the physical consciousness it is possible but in the body, not yet.

Besides, Sri Aurobindo has told us that it would take three hundred years, so we have time to wait. We must only learn to wait, learn to last it out.

That's all?

Sweet Mother, how can one transform pain into forms of pleasure?

Ah! But that's not something to be done, my children. I shall certainly not give you the method! It is a perversion.

The first thing and the most indispensable is to nullify the pain by cutting the connection. You see, one becomes conscious of the pain because it is there.

For example, you have cut your finger, there's a nerve that has been affected, and so the nerve quickly goes to tell the brain, up there, that something has happened which is wrong, here. That is what gives you the pain to awaken your attention, to tell you: "You know, there's something wrong." Then the thought immediately feels anxious: "What is wrong? Oh! How it hurts", etc., etc. — then returns to the finger and tries to arrange what is not yet destroyed. Usually one puts a small bandage. But in order not to have the pain, if it hurts very much, you must quite simply cut the connection by thought, saying to the nerve, "Now remain quiet, you have done your work, you have warned me, you don't need to say anything any longer; ploff! I am stopping you." And when you do it well, you suffer no longer, it is finished, you stop the pain completely. That is the best thing. It is infinitely preferable to telling yourself that it is painful.

I knew someone who had... I don't know if you have ever had an ingrowing nail — an ingrowing nail means a nail which

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enters the skin, it hurts very much when it is in the foot; it grows into the skin; so naturally, especially if one wears tight shoes, it hurts very much. Well, I knew a boy who started pressing his nail, like this (*gesture*), with the idea that pain is simply an incapacity to bear certain intensities of vibrations, you see; so he went beyond the measure, and in fact he pressed, it hurt abominably at first, he pressed until his hurt was changed into a kind of pleasure, and this succeeded very well.

If you have some pain, and you give yourself much more pain still, then finally there's a moment when you either faint away (people who are a little weak and not very enduring faint) or else it changes into pleasure; but this is not recommendable. I am just telling you that it can be done. I saw a boy—he was twelve—who was doing that, and he was doing it very deliberately, very consciously. He had never heard of yoga but he had found it out all by himself. But this is not recommendable because his toe became worse. This didn't make it better at all.

But my own method which consists in saying to the nerve, "Now you have done your job, keep quiet, you don't need to tell me anything more", is much better. One cuts it and then it's over.

When one has a very bad toothache (I don't know if you have a toothache sometimes or not; a toothache hurts terribly because the nerve is quite, quite close to the brain, so it doesn't lose its intensity on the way, it is very direct and hurts very much), the best way—in fact there's no other—the best way is to cut it: "It is good, you have done your work, you told me that something was wrong there, that's enough, don't move now." And one cuts, cuts it like this (*gesture*), cuts the connection, it doesn't transmit again. Naturally you must think of something else. If afterwards you start saying, "Do I still have the pain?..." (*Laughter*)

Mother, here Sri Aurobindo has said that pain is a degradation of an original Ananda...

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Yes, but everything, everything is a degradation. He has said, pleasure also. Pleasure and pain are equally a degradation of Ananda. Besides, the capacity for balance of the human physical consciousness is very small. If you have a pleasure which you push a little too far, whatever it may be, it immediately becomes a pain — whatever it may be. And there is always a place where one no longer knows whether it is a pleasure or a pain, it can as well be this or that. But wait a bit, eat something that's too sweet and you will see the effect. At first you say that it's very good, then suddenly it becomes something which... oh! it is almost unbearable. For everything it is like that, for everything. They are very close relations, you see.

That's all? You still have something to ask?

Mother, there are periods when there is a collective illness in the Ashram...

Yes, not only in the Ashram. Unfortunately, first it comes in the town and then someone very kindly... people who spend their time frequenting the town, you see, bring it along here, and then here people are like Panurge's sheep, when there's one who has caught it, it is considered smart, it is an elegance, everybody catches it.

(Silence)

What did you want to ask?

I wanted to ask why it is...

Why? There! I have answered you.

Spirit of imitation! Panurge's sheep!

Do you know what Panurge's sheep are? You don't? Oh! It is... I think the first story... I don't know if he took it from old traditions, it is possible, but still... you have heard of Rabelais?

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Yes? Well, it was told in France by Rabelais in a book — it is... (*Mother turns to Pavitra, who doesn't know, then to Nolini*) Perhaps Nolini knows!

(Nolini) "*Pantagruel*".

"Pantagruel"! Well, I know nothing about it. It is one of the famous books of Rabelais... which I haven't read, besides... but he tells the story of a flock of sheep which were transported on a boat and then... I don't know whether it did so deliberately or it happened by chance, I don't remember this now because I have read the story as told by several different persons... I mean, there are even old Hindu traditions like this, I think, there are Persian stories like this, there are Arab stories like this; so I don't exactly know what Rabelais has said; however, the story goes like this:

For some reason or other one of the sheep falls from the boat into the sea, and all the rest follow one after another (*Laughter*). Because one has gone over, all rush headlong into the water. So it has become famous. They are called Panurge's sheep.

But there is only one way, it is to do as I said, it is the individual atmosphere, calm, luminous, quiet... Then one no longer becomes the sheep of Panurge.

There we are, my children. That's all?

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This talk is based upon Mother's article "The Problem of Woman"¹.

Now, no questions! I have nothing to add. I have said everything. You wanted to ask something?

You have given the title "The Problem of Woman", but you speak equally about the problem of man.

Yes, because it is difficult to separate them. I didn't mean that it is a problem that women have to solve; I meant that it is the problem which life on earth has posed because of women.

Men, until not very long ago, were perfectly satisfied with themselves and what they had done. It is a little more than a century ago that women began to protest. Before, they seemed to say nothing or in any case they had no opportunity to say something. However, quite recently — it is not so long ago — women began to say, "Excuse us, but we indeed are not satisfied." Formerly, if ever they dared to say such a thing, probably they received a knock and were told, "Keep quiet, it's no business of yours." Yet things went on in spite of everything, and it was at the end of the century that there began a public protest of women against the way men treated them; because all the laws made by men were to man's advantage, and all the social organisations made by men were to man's advantage, and woman always had a lower position and sometimes an absolutely detestable one. In certain countries it is still like that...

However, till then, if they had protested it must have been either individually or in a rather hidden fashion, because it did

¹ First published in the *Bulletin* of April 1955, now published in *On Education*, CWM, Vol. 12, pp. 102–06

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not become a public question. But at the end of the last century there was a movement called feminism and women began to protest violently against things as they were, saying, "Excuse us, we find that you have failed in all your affairs, and you have not managed anything well. All that you have done seems absolutely bad. You have not succeeded in doing anything, except in fighting among yourselves, killing one another and making life unbearable for everybody. We are beginning to say that we have something to say, and we mean that this won't do and that it must improve." That is how it began. Then, you see, protestations, fights, mockery... They tried to stifle them with ridicule. But it was the men who made fools of themselves, it was not the women (*Mother laughs*), and finally, they gained one thing: they can now put in their word in the affairs of State.

It began... it was a frightful scandal but now it is a recognised fact, and we even find that in certain countries, slightly less backward than others, women are admitted in the government. And I must say that, as far as I know, the first country where this happened was Sweden. I knew it at the beginning of this century. It was then that it happened. Women were admitted into Parliament in Sweden, and in the government, and the first thing they did, that they managed to do, was to abolish drunkenness.

That is...?

Drunkenness, you don't know what drunkenness is? Drunkenness means to drink alcohol, and it is something very widespread, unfortunately, over the whole earth, and it is men who drink, usually. Among the working classes, as soon as they have received their pay they go and drink away more than half of it, and when the wife goes to ask them for money to get food for them, she gets a beating. That's how things usually occur. And the Swedish Government had tried for a very long time, because these people were quite reasonable and found that it was one of the things which most harmed social peace; but they had never

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succeeded. But it seems that within something like two or three years of government, women succeeded in doing it. And it was finished, one heard no more about it. How they did it I don't remember now. Someone had told me then. Naturally, not by prohibition, because wherever that has been tried, it has never succeeded. But they succeeded. It is there. Now it is there. It took more than half a century to spread. Now there are many countries in which women are in the Government.

(*To Pavitra*) Are there any in France? Are there women members of Parliament?

(Pavitra) *Yes.*

There are?

(Pavitra) *Yes. Ministers. There was one.*

No. Secretary of State, not minister. There were some, they have tried.

(Pavitra) *There is a Minister of Education.*

No, not that, but Secretary of State; there was one. In fact I say this because France was one of the most backward countries, and it is still so. And this is something very interesting: it is perhaps the country which had the most advanced ideas from the political point of view; it is from France that the ideas of Equality, Fraternity and Liberty have come; it is there that this has taken birth and from there it has spread over the world, but from the point of view of the relations between man and woman, it was certainly the most backward of all. There are psychological reasons for this, but I don't want to speak about them here. There, then!

Sweet Mother, here it is said: "All men are feminine in

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many respects and all women are masculine in many traits, especially in modern societies.”

Yes, there is no pure type.

Then why is there a complex still?

Because they don't know themselves. They don't know themselves and then they are the slaves of their form. Because when they look at themselves in a mirror they see that they are men, and the women see that they are women — and they are slaves of the physical form. It is only because of that.

But moreover, I have often met men who were extremely feminine from certain points of view, but not in a very pleasant way, and it was they who asserted most their masculine rights and had most the sense of their superiority. Besides, I have also met, especially at the beginning of the feminist movement... all the women who wanted to take part in feminism used to wear false collars, cravats, vests, they cut their hair, they looked... they tried to look as masculine as they could. But they were deplorably feminine, *deplorably!* (*Laughter*) They wanted to please, wanted to attract attention; and if by ill-luck a man treated them like men, they were extremely angry. (*Laughter*) For this — much time is needed to be transformed.

And then?

Sweet Mother, here you speak of the Supreme Mother. Is she the same as the one Sri Aurobindo speaks of in “The Mother”?

Yes.

Then the conception of the Supreme Mother is purely human? Or she too in her origin has no gender?

No.

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But I have never said that it was purely human. I said that it was the formulation which was human. I haven't said that it was purely human; nowhere have I said that it was purely human. One could say that this explanation is a little too human but I don't mean that she is purely human.

Then in her origin she has a gender?

Beyond the manifestation there is no differentiation, that is, there are not *two*, there is only *one*. It was at the moment of creation that it became two. But before that it was one, and there was no difference; as it was one, it was only one. There were countless possibilities, but it was one, in fact it was one, and it was only in the creation that it became two. The differentiation is not something eternal and co-existent. It is for the creation, and in fact for the creation of this world only. There were perhaps many worlds created in an absolutely different way from this our universe. Not only were they there, but perhaps at this moment there are countless universes with which we have no contact and of which therefore we are totally ignorant and which may exist.

Are there any, Sweet Mother?

I am telling you it is possible. (*Laughter*) We can say nothing about it. We know nothing about it. All that we know, if we know it at all, is our own universe, that's all. But there is no reason why there could not be others — one can't say, "There aren't any others", one knows nothing about it — where all things are absolutely different, perhaps so different that we have no relation. What I say at the end is this, isn't it? I say at the end that... There will be a new creation, the supramental creation. Well, there's no reason why this creation may not have... may not take a different form from the one which has been here up till now. And as for me, what I say there is that this is the only solution to the problem, that instead of there being this division,

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it may be a creation, a being which will be... which will unite “conception and execution, vision and creation in one single consciousness and action” — because that’s what has produced the differentiation, the fact that there was the conception and then the execution of this conception, the vision of what had to be and the creation of this vision, that is, the objective realisation of this vision; well, there is no reason why it should be divided; the two things can be done by the same being and therefore there should be only one single being.

Instead of there being two lines, one masculine and one feminine, there should be one single being, and that’s what I conceive as the solution of all problems — all problems, not only this one — and as the prototype of the supramental creation.

Sweet Mother, here you have said that the Supreme Mother is the creatrix of the universe. But in India usually it is said that Brahma is the creator.

But Sri Aurobindo has said that the Supreme Mother is the mother of Brahma. She is the Mother of all the gods.

The genders of the gods and goddesses are also human formations?

No, no! Why should they be human formations? I have never said that they were of human formation. The gods and goddesses of the Overmind are gods and goddesses differentiated in their form. It is not man who has created the gods of the Overmind, the gods of the Overmind come of a direct creation. I don’t know if they preceded men, but I think so. I think terrestrial creation, the terrestrial formation was made by the godheads of the Overmind, and that in fact there are many godheads of the Overmind who were fashioners upon earth, not incarnated upon earth but fashioners of what occurred upon earth, who gave the ideas, the forms. Sri Aurobindo always used to say that

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what was formerly called “god” was a being of the Overmind, that the supreme godhead was a being of the Overmind.

Mother, if there is a differentiation between the forms of the gods and goddesses, does the same problem come up for them also?

Ah! This, my child, you may ask them; but if we are to believe the stories we have been told, between them there are disputes and difficulties and quarrels and all kinds of things, things like that and even jealousies. There are times when they are not much wiser than men.

Sweet Mother, how were the gods and goddesses born?

But it is precisely... it is part of the creation. What we call “Aditi” here, that is, the Creative Consciousness, well, the Creative Consciousness...

I am going to tell you about this in an absolutely childish way:

She formed at first four beings; when she received the mission to create she put out four emanations from her being; and these four emanations were made and given the charge to develop the universe. And then — I think I have already spoken to you about this once — it turned out badly, we could put it like that; and so when things went wrong, she made another creation of all the beings who became the gods; and parallel to the disorder created by the first four emanations, there was the development in order, that is, under the guidance of the Supreme, the creation in order of all the worlds descending further and further towards Matter. And it is to this line that the gods belong who were manifested later, a formation, a greater and greater materialisation in the domain which Sri Aurobindo has termed the Overmind. And from there they presided over the creation of the material universe and the earth. And one of the proceedings

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was the formation of the earth as a symbolic creation representative of the whole universe, in order to condense and concentrate the problem so that it might be solved more easily. And this earth, though it may be from the astronomical point of view something infinitesimal and as unimportant as can be, from the occult point of view of the universal creation it is a symbol which represents the universe so perfectly that by transforming the earth one can through contagion or analogy transform the universe, because the earth is the symbol of the universe. This was the procedure adopted by the gods. And the place that's the seat of existence of these gods Sri Aurobindo has called the Overmind.

Of course things are not like that. Don't think that I have just told you the story as it really happened. Things are not like that, but it's a way of speaking, a way of making them understandable to the brain. It appears to have occurred like that.

But the four beings I first spoke to you about are sexless, they were neither man nor woman; and in the vital world there is an entire part of the vital creation which is the result of these beings, an entire part which has no sex. Besides, the gods too made a world which was sexless. It is the world of angels, what are called angels, what in occultism are called fashioners. But these are sexless spirits; they are represented with wings, you know, they are sexless spirits.

There are in the universe, already, beings who have no sex, who are neither men nor women, and there are many of them in the vital world. There are entities with sex in the vital world but in its most material part, the one closest to the earth, and not in its most important part; the most important part is sexless. This does not make them any better, however, since they are all beings hostile to the divine Will and divine realisation, but it gives them a terrific force. And so in return the gods too have created a whole set of beings who have no sex and whom men speak of as angels; how does one call it? "Your guardian angel", or what else? It is especially "angel".

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(Pavitra) *Cherubim, seraphim.*

Yes, yes, that's it. They have given many names. There, then.

Sweet Mother, in the old traditions they always speak of the wives of the gods who are troubled by the asuras.

What, the wives of the gods who were troubled by the asuras?
Yes!

They too are closer to the material world? Is it in the vital world or in...

It is in the vital world.

(Pavitra) *Mother, in the mind also, there are beings of the mind...*

There are beings of the mental world which are also sexless, not all, but many. There are many of them. There are some of these mental formations which are persistent, you see, which are very well made, very well harmonised, persistent, some kind of mental constructions, mental formations which are living beings, but which pass indifferently from a masculine to a feminine body when they incarnate. It is all the same to them, to them it makes no difference.

That's all, or you still have something?

Mother, what is the real reason for the appearance of sex? Because in the study of biology we see that first the unicellular animals were sexless; sex appeared later.

That — it is Nature, my child, who has tried all kinds of methods. These are all means employed by Nature; she wanted... It would seem that for the perfection of the species the dividing

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was necessary from the point of view of the material evolution; it seems so because obviously it was adopted later. This... Nature... I think she has tried every possible thing, everything.

But you say that even the gods have a sex.

Yes. Well, perhaps it is under their inspiration that Nature made it. It is certainly not because it appeared on earth that it is like that with the gods. So logically we can think that because it was like that among the gods it has become like that on earth. But Nature doesn't seem to have received direct inspirations; she seems to have followed her own path in her own fashion. Yet she has tried all possible things; I don't think there's anything she hasn't tried, and she goes on. But Nature too has created sexless beings, even in human form; it has happened. I have even seen a Greek statue like that. The Greeks knew this.

Everything that one can imagine and much more, Nature has imagined. Only, she doesn't want to be hurried. I think it amuses her. So she wants to go in her own way: trying, demolishing, re-starting, demolishing again. She can destroy an entire species by doing just this (*gesture*), it is quite the same to her; she would simply say, "No, it was not good." And then, there, it is finished. And she doesn't want to be hurried. If she is told that we find it has lasted long enough like this, that it could come to a slightly more harmonious conclusion, she revolts, she is not at all pleased. This is what she always says: "But why are you in a hurry? All that you want to do will happen, but it is not necessary that it should happen so fast. Why are you in such a hurry?" That's what she always answers. She likes to roam about.

What is Nature? That is, what is her relation with the Supreme Mother?

I think that Nature is the most material part of the creative force

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which is concerned with the creation specially of the earth, of the material world as we know it upon earth.

I want some information about the latest astronomical discoveries...

(To Pavitra) Is similar matter known in the other worlds as that on the earth?

(Pavitra) *Everywhere, Mother. Up to now no difference has been found in the matter not only of the solar system but also of the others.*

It is all the same. And then, how is it that we are told that human beings could not live on other planets, not even on Jupiter or Venus?

(Pavitra) *The elements are the same, the chemical elements, for instance, are the same. But those which have been formed, at present — for example in Jupiter there would be an atmosphere of ammonia and carbonic gas...*

Yes. So the formation is not the same after all?

(Pavitra) *The physical body, evidently, organic matter cannot be the same.*

Yes, the one people usually know...

(Pavitra) *... cannot be the same.*

Cannot be the same, you see.

Are there psychic beings up there or are they only in Matter?

I have heard that only on the earth there are psychic beings, precisely because the earth has been created as a symbol for

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concentrating the problem, and the psychic being, which is the result of the direct intervention of the Supreme, has been created here exactly for the necessities of this symbolic action.

Are there really any beings on Jupiter or Mars?

For me, if you ask me, there are beings everywhere. Everywhere. One doesn't see them, that's all. But they are everywhere. But certainly I don't think they are like what we see in the pictures — the Martians you were shown in the pictures with grotesque forms. I have no reason to think that they are like that.

Have you heard the story of the flying saucer?

Ah, yes! I have studied it also. However, I am waiting to have a physical experience. I indeed saw a flying saucer pass over Pondicherry during the war, I saw it clearly, with open eyes, and going fairly slowly, coming from the sea to the land. It was light blue and had a slightly rounded shape like this. I saw it passing by and said to myself, "Why, I have a vision!" I rubbed my eyes but my eyes were open, completely open... Suddenly I saw a form passing in the sky like this; I told myself, "How strange it is!" but as no one had spoken about it till then, I thought that I had a vision. I see many things which people ordinarily don't see; but when people started speaking about this, then I said to myself, "Why, I have seen a flying saucer pass by." But I think Udar also has seen a flying saucer.

(Udar) *Yes, Mother.* (Laughter)

That it exists is unquestionable. What is it? Each one has his opinion. But what I would like is to find myself face to face with the beings as they have been described. There is someone who has, supposedly... anyway, he said that he has spoken to a being who was in a flying saucer. Well, I would be very happy to meet

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a being like that. After that I shall tell you what it is — when I have met it.

Mother, it is said that there are other solar systems where perhaps one can find a similar situation as on earth. But down there can we find men like us?

You must go there and see. (*Laughter*)

Mother, can we go to the other planets by occult means?

Ah! Yes, one can go everywhere. What prevents us from going? One goes everywhere. Only, you see, we must know that it is not the physical body which goes; it is the most material thing... the most material vital; and this is already very difficult.

Usually it is the mental part of the vital which goes out; not the mind, the vital. For short distances one can go out from his body with the subtle physical, and in these cases one sees things materially as they are. But one can't go long distances. There are practical reasons, but above all there is the reason of safety; because if one goes too far with the subtle physical, the body is not only in a trance, it is in a cataleptic state, and then, unless it is guarded by someone who has a very profound knowledge and a great power, this can turn out badly. Therefore, for these long journeys it is usually the most subtle part of the vital (which corresponds to a kind of mental consciousness of the vital), which goes out.

So one sees everything which has a similar quality. But supposing there is something very material, one doesn't see it as it is. So one can't say with certainty, "It is like this or like that." One can say, "I saw this," that's all. But one can't recount stories like those in the papers about what is happening on the moon or Jupiter or Venus. One can have an experience and know certain things but usually they are things of a more psychological nature.

However, if it is in order to know whether there are some

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beings there, I don't think there's any place in the universe where there aren't beings, because that's the very principle of this universe: individual creations. Everywhere there are individual creations but they have different densities. Most of them are invisible except to those with a similar density, and only those who have the capacity of coming out of their bodies and going for a stroll can see these things. But so long as you use these eyes you can't see very much.

Such a limited field of vision! In fact, when you think of it, such an absolutely ridiculous limitation! The field of our sense experience has an absolutely ridiculous limitation; while in the mind, if you think of someone or something, a city or a place, you are there immediately, instantaneously, you see. And you are there—it is not that you are not there, you are there, and you can have so precise a mental contact that you can have a conversation, ask questions and receive answers, on condition that the other person is fairly sensitive. Why, this is something which happens constantly, constantly. Only, you must have a little knowledge, naturally, for otherwise you don't even understand what is happening.

Even physically, with this, with the eyes, the nose, the fingers, the mouth, the ears, oh, it is ridiculous! One can develop these if one wants. One can succeed, for example, in hearing something which occurs at a fairly great distance and hearing it physically, not by another means than the physical, but one must have a control over his senses and be able to prolong their vibrations sufficiently. One can see at a distance also, and not by an occult vision. One can manage to stretch his vision, and if he knows how to prolong the vibration of his nerves outside the organ, he can prolong the contact, I don't say some kilometres away, no, but in a certain area, say, for example, through a wall, which is considered something impossible; one can see what is going on in a room which is separated from another by a wall. But a very methodical practice is necessary. Yet this is possible, seeing, feeling, hearing. If one wants to take

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the trouble, one can enlarge his field considerably. But it asks for work, for perseverance, a kind of assiduous effort. Why, it has even been found that one can develop other visual centres than the eye. It has been tried out with people who, for some reason or other, have no vision in the eye. One can develop other centres or another centre of vision, by a continuous, methodical effort. Jules Romain has written a book about it. He himself conducted experiments and obtained very conclusive results.

This means that we have a number of possibilities which we let sleep within us, because we don't take the trouble to develop them very much. We can do infinitely more than we actually do. But we take things like that, as they come.

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Mother reads from Sri Aurobindo's *The Human Cycle*, Chapter 14, "The Suprarational Beauty".

I can see that you haven't understood three-fourths of the thing. Now we shall go slowly, step by step.

(*To a child*) Ask a question just from where it begins; simply say, "Here, what does this mean?"

Here, Sweet Mother, it is written: "...the intellectual reason may well be an insufficient help and find itself, not only at the end but from the beginning, out of its province and condemned to tread... diffidently..."

So?

So, by what do we begin if it is not by the intellect?

By what should one begin?

Yes, with the help of what?

You see, Sri Aurobindo defines religion as the seeking after the spiritual, that is, the Supermind, of what is beyond the ordinary human consciousness, and what ought to influence life from a higher realm. So, as religion seeks this it is beyond the reason, because it goes to the suprarational. And so how can reason help in the realm of religion? What he means is that if one uses reason to judge the field of religion and progress in it, one is sure to make mistakes, because reason is not the master there and it is not capable of enlightening. If you want to judge any religion with your reason, you are sure to make mistakes, for

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it is outside and beyond the field of reason. Reason can judge things which belong to the rational domain of ordinary life. And as he says later, the true role of reason is to be like a control and an organiser of the movements of human life in the mind and the vital.

Each time, for example, that one has some kind of vital disorder, of the passions, desires, impulses and all these things, if one calls the reason and looks at these things from the point of view of reason, one can put them back into order. It is truly the role of reason to organise and regulate all the movements of the vital and the mind. For instance, you can call the reason in order to see whether two ideas can go together or whether they contradict each other, whether two theories can stand side by side in your mental construction or one demolishes the other. It belongs to the domain of reason to judge and organise all these things, and also perhaps still more it is the work of reason to see whether the impulses are reasonable or not, whether they will lead to a catastrophe or can be tolerated and will not disturb anything in the life. So, this is its full domain; that's what Sri Aurobindo says.

But in order to know the value of a religion, whether it truly has the power to put you into contact with the Divine, with the spiritual life, to lead you to it, how can the reason judge, since it is beyond its domain? It knows nothing about it. It is not its field, it understands nothing there. We must use other means. Naturally, that's how he begins, at the end he will say what means one can use; I don't know whether it is at the end of these chapters, but in any case he always gives an indication. That's what this means; he says: Don't use reason, you cannot judge with it — that's all.

Is the reason always right in its own domain?

Reason? Yes. If it is really reason, it is right. It is not absolutely right if one looks at things from the spiritual point of view, for

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it understands nothing in these domains, but from the rational point of view it is naturally the sovereign judge.

For everything that concerns the ordinary life, and as I say, the mental, vital and physical life of man, a perfectly reasonable being, one who lives according to his reason, cannot make a mistake from this point of view. It is only if one says, "Human life restricted to these planes is not complete, nor perfect in these three planes, it is necessary to introduce a fourth one in it, the spiritual or suprarational plane", then from this point of view we begin to say, "Reason understands nothing of this, and here it must keep quiet and let the suprarational influence work." But from the viewpoint of the ordinary life, for people who lead the ordinary life, who do not want to do yoga or develop spiritually, reason is certainly an absolute and very recommendable master. People who live according to reason are usually very sattwic and do not commit any kind of excesses or make serious mistakes, they live reasonably. It is only when one comes out of the ordinary life, when one wants to enter a life leading to a spiritual realisation, that the reason has to abdicate. It can help all the same so long as one is not the absolute master of the movements of his mind and vital. As long as these two things are not transformed, to use your reason is very reasonable, because it will help you to master these movements.

Another question?

(*To another child*) You have understood, haven't you? — understood something in any case. No? Then ask a question.

Sweet Mother, what is the suprarational beauty?

Ah! That, my child, when we have read the chapter you will know, because that's the very subject of the chapter. So he is going to explain it to you right through. If I tell you about it now it won't be worth the trouble to read the chapter. (*Laughter*)

Is reason the highest function of the mind?

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Of the mind properly speaking, of the human mind, yes, certainly. That is, with the reason one doesn't risk making mistakes, as long as one remains in the purely human and purely mental domain.

How can reason become an obstacle to the spiritual life?

Because it understands nothing about it. Spiritual life goes beyond it, it is not its domain, and it doesn't understand anything there. It is a very good instrument for all ethics, morality, self-control, but spiritual life goes beyond these things and reason understands nothing of it.

But if one truly has reason, then reason has to admit that the spiritual life is higher!

Yes.

Then why does it become an obstacle?

On condition that it keeps quiet, does not intervene any more... if it tries to intervene it is an obstacle, if it withdraws in an orderly way and remains quiet, then it is very good.

It is an obstacle if you want to use it as judge and master. But it is not an obstacle if you use it as an instrument, like all the other parts of the being. It is an excellent instrument on condition that it remains an instrument and doesn't want to become the master who decides and judges. It is a power of judgment which, in its field, is absolutely right. But as soon as it goes beyond its domain, it cannot understand, it has no discernment any longer.

So if the reason understands this and keeps quiet, with the attitude of an instrument and not of master and judge, it is perfect. But for this the growing consciousness must already be developed enough in a suprarational domain to be able to

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act on the reason from above and make it understand the thing, because that domain is not a part of reason. So naturally it denies it unless there is a part of the consciousness which is sufficiently developed to be able to put something upon it that will make it understand. All depends on the degree of development of the individual's consciousness. It is a purely individual question.

Mother, when you speak of the suprarational domain, is it a domain higher than the reason or is it a special domain?

It is rather a state than a domain. In the physical it is possible to have a suprarational domain, in the vital it is possible to have a suprarational domain, in the mind too it is possible to have a suprarational domain, and there are suprarational regions which lie beyond all these domains. In a certain part of the consciousness and of life it is rather a state than a region. It is a mode of being. It is something which goes beyond the state of ordinary consciousness. But even physically it can be experienced, vitally also. Suddenly one may feel that one is in contact with something surpassing all rational regions and it is there, in the vital itself, it is an influence acting from above. Otherwise it would be absolutely impossible to hope for the transformation of the lower parts of the being — either mental or vital or physical; they could never be transformed if they were incapable of receiving into themselves the suprarational influence; and it is here, it is to be found, to be discovered.

Sweet Mother, here Sri Aurobindo has written: "On one side it (the reason) is an enlightener — not always the chief enlightener..."

Yes, this is what we said, that in the rational domain that's what gives the true judgment, the true guidance. This is what we call an enlightener: one who gives light. When you are not sure of

something, when you are in darkness, in a confusion, if you call to reason, it can guide you very well, make you see clearly where you were in darkness; therefore it is an enlightener. Now, “minister of the Spirit” means precisely what he was asking, that is, that it can be transformed into an instrument for revealing the spiritual reality in the lower parts of the being; “minister of the Spirit” — that’s what it means; a minister is an instrument of something, you see, it means the instrument of the Spirit. And it can prepare the paths for the coming of the rule of the Spirit, precisely make the being balanced and peaceful, right in its judgments, right in its way of acting, so that being in a state of luminous equilibrium, it becomes capable of receiving the Spirit.

A being who is in a whirlwind of darkness is obviously not ready to receive the Spirit. But when by the use of reason one has managed to organise his being logically and reasonably, in a balanced and wise way — reason is essentially an instrument of wisdom — well, this is an excellent preparation for going beyond, on condition that one knows that it is not a culmination, that it is only a preparation. It is like a base, you see; people who have spiritual experiences, who have a contact with the higher worlds and are not ready in the lower domains, have a lot of trouble, because they have to fight constantly against a heap of elements which are neither organised nor purified nor classified; and each one pulls its own way, there are impulses and preferences and desires, and so this light which has come from above has to organise all this; whereas if the reason had worked to begin with and made the place at least a habitable one, when the Spirit came it would have been more easily installed.

How can the reason be developed?

Oh! By using it. Reason is developed like the muscles, like the will. All these things are developed by a rational use. Reason! Everyone possesses reason, only he doesn’t make use of it. Some people are very much afraid of reason because it contradicts their

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impulses. So they prefer not to listen to it. Then, naturally, if one makes it a habit not to listen to reason, instead of developing, it loses its light more and more.

To develop reason you must want to do it sincerely; if on one side you tell yourself, "I want to develop my reason", and on the other you don't listen to what the reason tells you to do, then you never come to anything, because naturally, if each time it tells you, "Don't do this" or "Do this", you do the opposite, it will lose the habit of saying anything at all.

Mother, even in ordinary life, how can reason help in the appreciation of beauty, for example?

It cannot do it. That's exactly what Sri Aurobindo is going to tell you in here: that reason is quite useless for appreciating beauty. In the last analysis, it is worthless, because beauty is something analogous to religion and goes beyond reason. The whole chapter is going to explain this to you. That is why he calls it the suprarational beauty. The higher principle of beauty is a suprarational principle and therefore reason understands nothing at all about it. If you want to judge art by reason you are sure to say foolish things.

In here (I think it is in this very chapter), he shows that beauty belongs to a domain as lofty as that of religion; that through beauty one can come into contact with the Divine even as through religion. And the next chapter is "The Suprarational Good", and there he is going to show that reason cannot be the final judge also for what is good and not good; that the final judge is a suprarational judge. Only, in the same way, it can be a preparation, it can prepare the road by which to go there; but it is only a preparation. Of course, to understand fully what he wanted to tell us, we should have to read the entire book. But that way it would take us something like ten years, so I am not trying. I have taken only these because these two subjects are very interesting, apart from all the others: beauty and the good.

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Beauty is the aesthetic instinct of man, and the good is his ethical instinct, and these two things are very important in human education and growth; and that is why I have chosen these two chapters for you. But to have the full development of the idea you must read the whole book. Later you will read it... perhaps some of you will have the curiosity to read it.

Sweet Mother, what do aesthetic and ethical mean?

Aesthetic is what is concerned with beauty, and ethical with the good.

Look, my children, if there are words which you don't understand, take a dictionary and look them up. Because that will teach you the language and at the same time you will learn a little French. But, these words are the same in English; you ought to know them. They are written a little differently, pronounced a little differently, but they are exactly the same words.

Mother, here Sri Aurobindo says: "In its own sphere of finite knowledge, science, philosophy, the useful arts, its right, one would think, must be indisputable. But this does not turn out in the end to be true..."

Then what should be the function of reason in the study of science, philosophy and the useful arts?

A function of preparation, as I said; it is in order to prepare for something higher which is suprarational and which must come. It is a preparation. You see, he has said, "one would think", it means that it is just an impression one has that its right is indisputable. It is not indisputable. He says that its province is vast, you see, that its powers are ample, that its action is more self-confident, but it always finds itself standing between the two other powers of our being, the infrarational and the suprarational. It is an intermediary to free us from the infrarational influence — that of all the instincts, all the desires, all the

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passions, all the impulses — to free us from this domain and prepare for the coming of the suprarational one. Therefore it is an instrument of mediation, of transition, and in this intermediating... in this region, it is the best master. But it cannot go further. There is a point where it loses its power. When one is ready for the suprarational intervention, well, it has to keep quiet; and if for example, by an inner development, by a yogic action you have managed to come into contact with a divine consciousness and receive inspirations from this divine consciousness, if at this moment you want to judge these inspirations by the reason, then you are sure to make stupid mistakes, because reason understands nothing of this, and it should abdicate. But you must be sure that it is truly a contact with the divine Force; and to be sure of this... well, until one is sure of it, reason is very good for preventing you from deceiving yourself.

Usually people who have a tendency for not altogether ordinary experiences find reason very troublesome; and even before being ready to surpass its action they reject it, and that is how usually they become absolutely unreasonable and end up by being half-mad. That is why, so long as you don't have an absolute certainty of having reached where you want to go, well, you must keep the reason very active in yourself in order to prevent yourself from becoming derailed. This is very, very important. One cannot dethrone reason unless the experience of the higher regions is so absolute, so true, so complete, that it compels recognition. It is not a very frequent thing. So I always advise people to keep their reason. But there's a point where it must cease having its superior rights — that's to judge spiritual experience, because it cannot judge this, it does not understand it; but it must truly be a spiritual experience, not something which tries to imitate it; here an absolute sincerity is necessary. One must not deceive oneself through ambition, or indeed let oneself be deceived by any odd humbugs who come and tell you extraordinary stories in order to make you believe in their superiority.

That's all?

To prepare the path means...?

Oh! What does it mean, to prepare the path?

Have you never had the feeling in your life that you were on the way towards something? No? One doesn't have the impression that when he is born he begins to set his feet on a road which is going to lead him by a curve through his whole life? That's the image. So if you take the path which must lead you to a spiritual realisation, well, it means that all your actions are deliberately going to be directed to this goal. And so he says that there is a bit of the way which is under the control of reason and that reason, if you follow it, helps you to go forward here without your making mistakes too often. For it is quite remarkable that in life you start without knowing anything, and that at each step you take you have to learn, and that usually you come to the end, to the end of the path, without having learnt anything very much, because too often you make mistakes and you have nothing to guide you.

Ordinary people enter life without even knowing what it is to live, and at each step they have to learn how to live. And before knowing what they want to realise, they must at least know how to walk; as we teach a tiny little child how to walk, in life one has also to learn how to live. Which people know how to live? And it is through experience, through mistakes, through all kinds of misfortunes and troubles of every sort that gradually one begins to be what is called reasonable, that is, when one has made a mistake a certain number of times and has had troublesome consequences from this mistake, one learns not to make it again. But there is a moment, when the brain is developed enough and you can use the reason, well, reason can help you to reduce the number of these mistakes, to teach you to walk the path without stumbling too often.

The immense majority of human beings are born, live and

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die without knowing why this has happened to them. They take it... it is like that; they are born, they live, they have what they call their joys and their sorrows, and they come to the end and go away. They came in and went out without learning anything. This indeed is the immense majority.

There is among them a small number of people called the *élite*, who try to know what has happened to them, why they are upon earth and why all that happens to them happens. Then among these there are some who use their reason and they find a way of walking properly on the path, much faster than the others. These are reasonable beings.

Now there is a handful — a big handful — of people who are born with the feeling that there is something else to find in life, a higher purpose to life, that there is an aim, and they strive to find it. So for these the path goes beyond reason, to regions which they have to explore either with or without help, as chance takes them, and they must then discover the higher worlds. But there are not many of this kind. I don't know how many of these there are now in the world, but I have the impression that they could still be counted. So for these it depends on when they begin.

Now there are beings, I think, who are born and whose rational period of life may begin very early, when they are very young, and it may last for a very short time; and then they are almost immediately ready to set out on new and unexplored paths towards the higher realities. But in order to set out on these paths without fear and without any danger, one must have organised his being with the help of reason around the highest centre he consciously possesses, and organised it in such a way that it is inwardly in his control and he has not to say at every moment, "Ah! I have done this, I don't know why. Ah! That's happened to me, I don't know why" — and always it is "I don't know, I don't know, I don't know", and as long as it is like that, the path is somewhat dangerous. Only when one does what he wants, knows what he wants, does what he wants and is able to direct himself with certitude, without being tossed about by the

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hazards of life, then one can go forward on the suprarational paths fearlessly, unhesitatingly and with the least danger. But one need not be very old for this to happen. One can begin very young; even a child of five can already make use of reason to control himself; I know it. There is enough mental organisation in the being in these little tots who look so spontaneous and irresponsible; there is enough cerebral organisation for them to organise themselves, their life, their nature, their movements, actions and thoughts with reason.

There are some little ones here of this kind. They are not all like that but there are some. There are some like that here, I know them. So if these were taught how to use their reason properly while still very young, they would be ready to start on the great adventure. They would gain much time. But one must not set out on this road with a baggage of impulses and desires, for that brings along all kinds of serious disturbances.

There, my children, that's all?

Nobody is saying a word?

(*To a child*) You have still something to say?

Do the laws of Nature follow the law of human reason?

Oh, no!

Then how can we explain so many laws of Nature by human reason?

Because human reason is higher than Nature.

Nature is infrarational. The laws of Nature are infrarational laws. So when men come along and tell you, "But what do you want, it is the law of Nature", as for me, it makes me laugh. It is not worth being a man, it would be better for you to be a monkey or an elephant or a lion. The laws of Nature are infrarational.

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This is the only superiority that man has, his having a reason, and when he doesn't make use of it he becomes absolutely an animal.

That's the last excuse to give: "What do you want, it's the law of Nature!"

It is late, otherwise I would tell you a few stories.

We must stop.

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Mother reads from *The Human Cycle*, Chapter 14, “The Suprarational Beauty”, second paragraph.

What do you want to ask about this?

Sweet Mother, what is an aesthetic conscience?

It is the consciousness of beauty. Aesthetic means that which concerns beauty, art. There are people, for example, who move around in life and see landscapes, see people and things and have absolutely no sense of whether it is beautiful or not; and into the bargain, it makes no difference at all to them. They look at the sky, see whether there are any clouds, whether it will rain or be clear, for instance; or whether the sun is hot or the wind cold. But there are others — when they raise their eyes and look at a beautiful sky, it gives them pleasure, they say, “Oh! It is fine today, the sunrise is lovely today, the sunset is beautiful, the clouds have fine shapes.” So, the first kind do not have an aesthetic conscience, the second have.

What does “the ordinary scale of our powers” mean?

“Scale” gives the idea of a gradation from the lowest to the highest powers; as, for example, the faculty to walk and the faculty to think: there’s a gradation between the two; the faculty of walking is an altogether physical one, the faculty of thinking is something intellectual. So these are different gradations of the consciousness of which Sri Aurobindo speaks here, “the ordinary scale of our powers”; he is not speaking of spiritual or yogic things; it is the scale of ordinary life, that is, for everyone it is like that. For he says that even in the barbarian, the savage,

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there is something which is not altogether savage, and that he has, he too, indeed, this scale; it is more rudimentary, more crude, but it exists, from the most material thing to an embryo of thought and speculation. As we are told, he has his own opinion about the world and what the world is, he has an idea about these things; it is perhaps a little childish but he has an idea about them. So he too has this gradation. Of course there are higher faculties than that of thought, but they are not frequent, that is, one doesn't often come across them.

That's all? What are we going to do?

*I have things to ask in the other paragraph, the next one.
I haven't understood very much.*

The next one? But the next one is for next Wednesday, unless you want me to read it to you.

No, Sweet Mother, the others have questions.

You have some questions? You have questions, you? Over there, do you have any questions? No questions?

Can beauty exist outside any form?

There is a beauty of feelings; unless you think that feelings also have a form. What you mean is: "Is there a beauty outside any physical form?"

Yes.

Ah! Yes, there is a beauty of thought, a beauty of feeling. This is something we perceive very often; when someone has done a very noble deed, very generous, very unselfish, quite spontaneously we say, "It is beautiful!" And it's true, it gives the sense of beauty.

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Beauty is not something purely physical. However, we have said that the best expression of the Divine in the physical world is beauty; but it is not exclusive, it does not mean that it is only in the physical world.

(Silence)

Isn't that all right?

Sweet Mother, Sri Aurobindo has said here: "...this seeking for beauty ... springs from the roots of our life..."

It springs from the roots of our life — so?

What are the roots of our life?

He means that it is instinctive, that it isn't rational, it doesn't depend on the domain of reason, it is something instinctive. We have a sense of beauty and love beauty without even knowing why, and there are things which give the sense of beauty without our knowing why, without our reasoning. It is instinctive. He says that this is the infrarational stage of the aesthetic sense. It is absolutely obvious that a child, who sees a pretty flower and has the feeling of beauty he does not know why, would never be able to tell you that it's because the form is balanced and the colours are lovely; he cannot explain it. Therefore it is not rational, it is altogether instinctive, it is an attraction, an impulse drawing one towards something, a harmony one feels, without being able to define it. But most often it is like that. It is rarely that one is able to say, "This thing is beautiful because of that, because of this," and to give a whole lecture on the beauty of something. Usually, one simply feels that it is beautiful; if later one wonders, "Why did I feel it is beautiful?" then, by making an effort with one's intelligence one may succeed in understanding it; but at the

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beginning one is not preoccupied with the why, one feels that it is beautiful, and that's all, one is satisfied with that.

For example, you enter a historical building, and suddenly you are seized by the sense of a great beauty; how do you explain it? If someone asks you about it you would say, "Well, I feel that it is beautiful." But if an architect enters a building and has the same feeling that it is beautiful, he will immediately tell you, "It's because the lines meet harmoniously, the mass of the volumes is in harmony, the entire structure follows certain laws of beauty, order and rhythm", and he will explain them to you. But that's because he is an architect, and yet you could have felt the beauty as much as he without being able to explain it. Well, your feeling for beauty is what Sri Aurobindo calls infrarational, and his feeling for beauty is what Sri Aurobindo calls rational, because he can explain with his reason why he finds it beautiful.

But even when you look at someone, a person, and find her beautiful, would you be able to tell yourself why? Not often. If you make an effort, look attentively, reflect, then you may begin to tell yourself, "Yes, why! it is for this, it is for that", and it is not at all certain that you are right.

In fact, beauty is something very elusive. It is a kind of harmony which you experience much more than think, and the true suprarational relation with beauty is not at all a "reasonable" relation (Sri Aurobindo will tell you this at the end), it completely overpasses reason, it is a contact in a higher realm. But what precisely he tells us in this paragraph is that when it is an instinct it is found mixed with movements of ignorance and a lack of culture and refinement. So this instinct is sometimes very gross and very imperfect in its expression. One can experience an aesthetic pleasure (let us call it that) in seeing something which is truly beautiful and at the same time something else which is not beautiful, but which gives one some sort of pleasure, because it is mixed, because one's aesthetic instinct is not pure, it is mixed with all kinds of sensations which are very crude and untrained. So it is here, as he says, that reason has its role, that it comes

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in to explain why a thing is beautiful, to educate the taste; but it is not final, and reason is not the final judge; it can very well make mistakes, only it is a little higher, as judgment, than that of a completely infrarational being who has no reason and no understanding of things. It is a stage. It is a stage, that's what he says, it is a stage. But if you want to realise true beauty, you must go beyond that, very far beyond this stage. In what follows in our reading he will explain it. But this is the summary of what he has said in this paragraph. At first your sense of beauty is instinctive, impulsive, infrarational, lacking light, wanting reason, simply without any true understanding, and so, because the origin of the aesthetic sense is infrarational, it is understood, one always says this: "There's no disputing tastes and colours." You know, there are all kinds of popular proverbs which say that the appreciation of the beautiful is not a matter of reasoning, everyone likes a particular thing he doesn't know why, he takes pleasure in looking at a thing, and this pleasure cannot be discussed. Well, this is the infrarational stage of the aesthetic sense.

Sweet Mother, last time, at the end of the class you were going to tell us something, but you stopped because we had no time.

Ah, you suppose that I remember! What was it about?

It was the morality of Nature.

Oh! It is not interesting.

It was a group of people whom I met in Paris. A certain gentleman had founded a group called "The Morality of Nature", and so he took his stand on all the movements of Nature to set up his moral code. But we know that Nature is... how to put it... a force, a consciousness or being, call it what you like, which is absolutely amoral, for whom the moral sense does not exist

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at all. So naturally this had rather disastrous results in practice. And in the very meeting where this gentleman was expounding his theories, there was a Catholic priest, a very learned man who studied many things (he knew lots of things), who immediately began to tell him that his morality of Nature was not moral. Then the other gentleman was not pleased and told him, “Oh, yes! You climb to the seventh storey of your ivory tower and from there you look at things without understanding them”. “The seventh storey of your ivory tower” was very amusing.

Well, he had found, according to himself (I don't remember his name now), he had found the means of being happy, that everyone may be satisfied and men may love one another. So naturally people who did not agree with him, said to him, “But how does it happen that when the law of Nature alone reigns — as for example, without even going as far as the animal, in vegetable life — how does it happen that there are constant massacres between plants and the perpetual struggle for life? Is this what you call harmony?” Then the other man did not understand anything.

In fact, people who are interested in general questions, those who come out of their little daily preoccupations of being born, living and dying, living as well as possible — there are people not satisfied with this, who try to have general ideas and look at world problems — these people make an inner effort or a mental effort, and in one way or another enter into contact with the great currents of forces, at first currents of mental force, of the higher light and sometimes of spiritual force. Then they receive a kind of drop of that within their consciousness, and this produces in them the illumination of a revelation, and they feel that they have grasped the truth. They have a revelation and so naturally are very happy and immediately think, “My happiness I am going to pass on to others”; for they are very fine people, they have very good intentions. Then, to pass on their happiness to others they begin by making a construction around their revelation; they must make it into a system; otherwise how

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to preach to others? So they make a system, like this gentleman. I have met hundreds like this in the world. Now, each one had had a revelation and had constructed something which seemed to him to be the solution to all problems. They wanted to apply it to everything. So they gathered people around them; according to the strength of their influence, their power, they gathered more people or less, from three or four to some hundreds; sometimes they had groups and they said, "Here we are, if everyone does what we do, well, the world will be transformed." Unfortunately it was only a spark of light, and their construction was purely mental and not free from the ordinary laws of life. And so the people in the groups who were to have preached to the world harmony, beauty, happiness, joy and peace, etc., quarrelled among themselves. This took away all power from their teaching. It is like this, and in fact it is true.

It is only when something absolutely new and absolutely superior enters the earth atmosphere and changes it by a kind of spiritual coercion, it is only at that moment that human consciousness will change sufficiently for circumstances also to change.

As for me, I have no illusions on the subject, because I know that Sri Aurobindo saw the truth of things and therefore, if humanity were ready to be transformed simply by the vision of the truth of things, well, at least all those who are in contact with this truth should be transformed. Well, they aren't.

You know all the defects which you have, personally and collectively, and how in spite of a goodwill which must be obvious, there is still much to do for the world to be as one conceives it when one comes out of ordinary notions — simply, let us say a world of harmony, peace, understanding, broad-mindedness, goodwill, unselfishness, disinterested consecration to a higher ideal, self-forgetfulness... you want more of these things, there are still many more. You must begin with just a little at first, simply this: to have slightly greater ideas, a little vaster understanding, not to be sectarian.

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What kind of reason guides the realistic and surrealistic artists who are so gross?

What kind of reason! But why do you suppose that it is reason? Unless reason is just an explanation we give of what they do! But otherwise why do you suppose that it is reason?

No, because Sri Aurobindo has said in this paragraph that it is here that reason guides.

But perhaps it is just because it does not guide them that they do what they do and as they do it, isn't that so?

But how does it happen that after having reached so high the art of painting becomes so ugly and childish?

But have you ever seen that the human ascent is like that, a funicular ascent, quite straight? It turns all the time. So if you assume that there are vertical lines which are lines of a kind of human progress, then when things come there, they progress, but when they go further away they degenerate.

I shall tell you perhaps in ten years... I don't know, perhaps in ten years I shall tell you whether there is something in modern painting. Because I am going to tell you something curious: for the moment I find it downright ugly, not only ugly but stupid; but what is frightening is that it makes you completely sick of all other pictures. When one sees painting as it is done today... for we receive all the time art reviews in which, with much intelligence, are put reproductions of both ancient and modern pictures, and they are put side by side, which makes the thing very interesting, you can see both and compare. I can't manage to have yet a very clear notion of beauty in what modern painters do, I confess this, I haven't yet understood; but what is curious is that they have succeeded in taking away from me all the taste for the painting of old; except some very

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rare things, the rest seems to me pompous, artificial, ridiculous, unbearable.

Now this means that behind this incoherence and chaos there certainly is, there must be a creative spirit which is trying to manifest.

We have passed from a particular world which had reached its perfection and was declining, this is absolutely obvious. And so to pass from that creation to a new creation (because... well, suppose that it is the forces of ordinary Nature which are acting), instead of passing through a continuous ascent, there was evidently a fall into a chaos, that is, the chaos is necessary for a new creation.

The methods of Nature are like that. Before our solar system could exist, there was chaos. Well, in passing from this artistic construction which had reached a kind of summit, before passing from this to a new creation, it seems to me still the same thing, evidently a chaos. And the impression I have when I look at these things is that they are not sincere, and that's what is annoying. It is not sincere: either it is someone who has amused himself by being as mad as possible or perhaps it is someone who wanted to deceive others or maybe deceive even himself, or again, a kind of incoherent fantasy in which one puts a blot of paint in one place and then says immediately, "Why, it would be funny to put it there, and if one put it here, like this, and again if one put this like that, and again..." There, for the moment this is the impression it gives me, and I don't feel that it is something sincere.

But there is a sincere creative spirit behind, which is trying to manifest, which, for the moment, does not manifest, but is strong enough to destroy the past. That is, there was a time when I used to look at the pictures of Rembrandt, of Titian, of Tintoretto, the pictures of Renoir and Monet, I felt a great aesthetic joy. This aesthetic joy I don't feel any more. I have progressed because I follow the whole movement of terrestrial evolution; therefore, I have had to overpass this cycle, I have

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arrived at another; and this one seems to me empty of aesthetic joy. From the point of view of reason one may dispute this, speak of all the beautiful and good things which have been done, all that is a different affair. But this subtle something, precisely, which is the true aesthetic joy, is gone, I don't feel it any longer. Of course I am a hundred miles away from having it when I look at the things they are now doing. But still it is something which is behind this that has made the other disappear. So perhaps by making just a little effort towards the future we are going to be able to find the formula of the new beauty. That would be interesting. It is quite recently that this impression came to me; it is not old. I have tried with the most perfect goodwill, by abolishing all kinds of preferences, preconceived ideas, habits, past tastes, all that; all that eliminated, I look at their pictures and I don't succeed in getting any pleasure; it doesn't give me any, sometimes it gives me a disgust, but above all the impression of something that's not true, a painful impression of insincerity.

But then quite recently, I suddenly felt this, this sensation of something very new, something of the future pushing, pushing, trying to manifest, trying to express itself and not succeeding, but something which will be a terrific progress over all that has been felt and expressed before; and then, at the same time is born the movement of consciousness which turns to this new thing and wants to grasp it. This will perhaps be interesting. That is why I told you: ten years. Perhaps in ten years there will be people who have found a new expression. A great progress would be necessary, an immense progress in the technique; the old technique seems barbarous. And now with the new scientific discoveries perhaps the technique of execution will change and one could find a new technique which would then express this new beauty which wants to manifest. We shall speak about it in ten years' time.

Au revoir!

8 June 1955

Mother reads from Sri Aurobindo's *Lights on Yoga*, "The Goal".

Now then! We shall have impromptu, improvised questions, not prepared ones. (*To a child*) You have any?

Sweet Mother, here it is written: "This liberation, perfection, fullness too must not be pursued for our own sake, but for the sake of the Divine." But isn't the sadhana we do done for ourselves?

But he stresses precisely that. It is simply in order to stress the point. It means that all this perfection which we are going to acquire is not for a personal and selfish end, it is in order to be able to manifest the Divine, it is put at the service of the Divine. We do not pursue this development with a selfish intention of personal perfection; we pursue it because the divine Work has to be accomplished.

But why do we do this divine Work? It is to make ourselves...

No, not at all! It is because that's the divine Will. It is not at all for a personal reason, it must not be that. It is because it's the divine Will and it's the divine Work.

So long as a personal aspiration or desire, a selfish will, get mingled in it, it always creates a mixture and is not exactly an expression of the divine Will. The only thing which must count is the Divine, His Will, His manifestation, His expression. One is here for that, one is that, and nothing else. And so long as there is a feeling of self, of the ego, the person, which enters,

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well, this proves that one is not yet what one ought to be, that's all. I don't say that this can be done overnight but still this indeed is the truth.

It is just because even in this field, the spiritual field, there are far too many people (I could say even the majority of those who take to the spiritual life and do yoga), far too many of these who do it for personal reasons, all kinds of personal reasons: some because they are disgusted with life, others because they are unhappy, others still because they want to know more, others because they want to become spiritually great, others because they want to learn things which they may be able to teach others; indeed there are a thousand personal reasons for taking up yoga. But the simple fact of giving oneself to the Divine so that the Divine takes you and makes of you what He wills, and this in all its purity and constancy, well, there are not many who do that and yet this indeed is the truth; and with this one goes straight to the goal and never risks making mistakes. But all the other motives are always mixed, tainted with ego; and naturally they can lead you here and there, very far from the goal also.

But that kind of feeling that you have only one single reason for existence, one single goal, one single motive, the entire, perfect, complete consecration to the Divine to the point of not being able to distinguish yourself from Him any longer, to be Himself entirely, completely, totally without any personal reaction intervening, this is the ideal attitude; and besides, it is the only one which makes it possible for you to go forward in life and in the work, absolutely protected from everything and protected from yourself which is of all dangers the greatest for you — there is no greater danger than the self (I take “self” in the sense of an egoistic self).

This is what Sri Aurobindo meant there, nothing else.

Now, who has found a question?

It is not in the words of the book that you must find the question, it is in the reaction that you had to what I read. If you have listened, it has had a certain effect on you, you must have

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had some reactions: it is this, these reactions which you must elucidate in yourself and if you could tell me one day, “Why! I felt like that, what does it mean, this sensation? Why did I think like that?” These surely are the questions! For then it would be the opportunity to elucidate something in your consciousness. When I read you surely must have some reaction somewhere, even were it only in your head. Well, this is what you should note and ask: “When I heard that sentence, why did I suddenly feel like this? When that was said, why did it make me think of this?” These would be interesting questions.

*Mother, you said just now that we must do everything
for the Divine.*

Yes.

*But why does the Divine want to manifest Himself on
earth in this chaos?*

Because this is why He has created the earth, not for any other motive; the earth is He Himself in a deformation and He wants to establish it back again in its truth. Earth is not something separated from Him and alien to Him. It is a deformation of Himself which must once again become what it was in its essence, that is, the Divine.

Then why is He a stranger to us?

But He is not a stranger, my child. You fancy that He is a stranger, but He is not, not in the least. He is the essence of your being — not at all alien. You may not know Him, but He is not a stranger; He is the very essence of your being. Without the Divine you would not exist. Without the Divine you could not exist even for the millionth part of a second. Only, because you live in a kind of false illusion and deformation, you are not

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conscious. You are not conscious of yourself, you are conscious of something which you think to be yourself, but which isn't you.

Then what is myself, Sweet Mother?

The Divine!

Sweet Mother, when you speak of the reactions when you are reading, personally I feel that all that I do is funny! From top to bottom everything has to be reorganised.

I didn't catch the end of the sentence.

(Pavitra) *Everything has to be reorganised.*

Yes. Why?

(Pavitra) *Everything is funny. "All that I do is funny!"*

Funny! Ah! That is why I didn't understand. Funny, yes; but from a certain point of view it is true; what everybody does, from a certain point of view, is funny.

There is an enormous wastage. All that I receive from you is lost all the time. Apparently everything is all right, and this continues, and it can so continue eternally. But if it has to change it will be a revolution, immediately, and that is why one doesn't want to risk it. There is hypocrisy: everything is all right, but it isn't true, there is an enormous loss of consciousness.

Is it possible to change this at once, change this consciousness?

Change?...

(Pavitra) *Change this, change this consciousness at once?*

Immediately?

(Pavitra) *In a few minutes. One feels that it will be a revolution to change that.*

Yes, but a revolution can occur in half a second; it can also take years, even centuries, and even many lives. It can be done in a second.

One can do it. Precisely, when one has this inner reversal of consciousness, in one second everything, everything changes... precisely this bewilderment of being able to think that what one is, what one considers as oneself is not true, and that what is the truth of one's being is something one doesn't know. You see, this should have been the normal reaction, the one she had, of saying, "But then what is myself? If what I feel as myself is an illusory formation and not the truth of my being, then what is myself?" For that she doesn't know. And so when one asks the question like that...

There is a moment — because it is a question which becomes more and more intense and more and more acute — when you have even the feeling, precisely, that things are strange, that is, they are not real; a moment comes when this sensation that you have of yourself, of being yourself, becomes strange, a kind of sense of unreality. And the question continues coming up: "But then, what is myself?" Well, there is a moment when it comes up with so much concentration and such intensity that with this intensity of concentration suddenly there occurs a reversal, and then, instead of being on this side you are on that side, and when you are on that side everything is very simple; you understand, you know, you are, you live, and then you see clearly the unreality of the rest, and this is enough.

You see, one may have to wait for days, months, years, centuries, lives, before this moment comes. But if one intensifies his aspiration, there is a moment when the pressure is so great and the intensity of the question so strong that something turns

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over in the consciousness, and then this is absolutely what one feels: instead of being here one is there, instead of seeing from outside and seeking to see within, one is inside; and the minute one is within, absolutely everything changes, completely, and all that seemed to him true, natural, normal, real, tangible, all that, immediately, — yes, it seems to him very grotesque, very queer, very unreal, quite absurd; but one has touched something which is supremely true and eternally beautiful, and this one never loses again.

Once the reversal has taken place, you can glide into an external consciousness, not lose the ordinary contact with the things of life, but that remains and it never moves. You may, in your dealings with others, fall back a little into their ignorance and blindness, but there is always something there, living, standing up within, which does not move any more, until it manages to penetrate everything, to the point where it is over, where the blindness disappears for ever. And this is an absolutely tangible experience, something more concrete than the most concrete object, more concrete than a blow on your head, something more real than anything whatever.

This is why I always say... when people ask me how one may know whether he is in contact with his psychic being or how one may know whether he has found the Divine, well, it makes me laugh; for when it happens to you it is over, you can no longer ask any questions, it is done; you do not ask how it happens, it is done.

I want to ask about this point: falling back into the ordinary consciousness, which is becoming more and more obstinate in me, personally; I feel it.

That's a purely personal question.

But why is it like that, when I know that it is absurd?

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It is because, I think, you have kept the division in your being, that is, there is one part of your being which has refused to go along with the rest. It is usually like this that it happens. There is one part which has progressed, one part which holds on and doesn't want to move; so you feel it more and more as something which persists in being what it is. That's because you have dropped some of your baggage on the way and left it on the roadside instead of carrying it along with you. That will always pull you backward. Sometimes, unfortunately, one has to turn back, go and pick it up and bring it along; so one loses much time. This is how, indeed, one loses time. It's because one shuts one's eyes to so many things in the being. One doesn't want to see them, because they are not so pretty to see. So one prefers not to know them. But because one is ignorant of the thing it doesn't mean that it doesn't exist any longer. One does this: one puts it down on the way and then tries to go forward, but it is bound by threads, it pulls one back like a millstone drag, and so one must courageously take it up and hold it up like this (*gesture*) and tell it: "Now you will walk along with me!" It's no use playing the ostrich. You see, one shuts the eyes and doesn't want to see that one has this fault or that difficulty or that ignorance and stupidity; one doesn't want to see, doesn't want, one looks away to the other side, but it remains there all the same.

One day you have to face the thing, you have to. Otherwise you can never reach the end, it will always pull you backward. You may feel ahead, may see the goal there, drawing near, all this more and more, you may have something which goes before and has almost the feeling that it is going to touch, but you will never touch it if you have these millstones pulling you back. One day you must make a clean sweep of everything. It sometimes takes very long but one must burn one's bridges; otherwise you go in a round, progress bit by bit until the end of your life, and then, when the time to leave has come you suddenly feel: "Ah! But... well, it will be perhaps for another time." This is not pleasant; why, it must be something frightful; for if one has known

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nothing, understood nothing, if one has never tried... People are born, live, die and are reborn and live and die again, and it goes on, continues indefinitely, they don't even put the problem before themselves. But when one has had the taste, the foretaste of what life is, and why one is here, and what one has to do here, and then in addition one has made some effort and tries to realise, if one doesn't get rid of all the baggage of what does not follow, then it will be necessary to begin again yet another time. Better not. It is better to do one's work while one can do it consciously, and indeed this is what is meant by "Never put off for tomorrow what you can do today." This "today" means in this present life, because the occasion is here, the opportunity here; and perhaps one will have to wait many thousands of years to find it once again. It is better to do one's work, at any cost. There!... Losing as little time as possible.

Every time you are afraid to face yourself and hide carefully from yourself what prevents you from advancing, well, it is as though you were building a wall on the way; later you must demolish it to pass on. It is better to do your task immediately, look yourself straight in the face, *straight in the face*, not try to sugar-coat the bitter pill. It is very bitter: all the weaknesses, uglinesses, all kinds of nasty little things which one has inside — there are, there are, there are, oh! lots of them. And so you are on the point of attaining a realisation, on the point of touching a light, having an illumination, and then suddenly you feel something pulling you back like this (*gesture*), and you suffocate, you cannot advance further. Well, in these moments some people weep, some lament, some say, "Oh, poor me, here it is yet once again!" All this is a ridiculous weakness. You have only to look at yourself like this and say, "What petty meanness, small stupidity, little vanity, ignorance, bad will is still there, hidden in the corner, preventing me from crossing the threshold, the threshold of this new discovery? Who is there in me, who is so small, so mean and obstinate, hiding there like a worm in a fruit so that I may not be able to see it?" If you are sincere you find

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it; but above all it is this, absolutely this: you always sugar-coat the pill. The sugar-coating is a kind of what is called mental understanding of oneself. So one coats as thickly with sugar as possible in order to hide well from oneself what is there, the worm in the fruit; and one does it always, always gives oneself an excuse, always, always.

What prevents me from opening myself to the influence is the suggestion, "Why hurry, why so soon, since the others are not doing it?"

This is a frightful platitude!

It is one of the most foolish excuses imaginable. No, there are others much more subtle and much more dangerous than that.

But even if you must be the one and only being in the whole creation who gives himself integrally in all purity to the Divine, and being the only one, being naturally absolutely misunderstood by everybody, scoffed at, ridiculed, hated, even if you were that, there is no reason for not doing it. One must be either a tinsel actor or else a fool. Because others don't do it? But what does it matter whether they do it or not? "Why, the whole world may go the wrong way, it does not concern me. There is only one thing with which I am concerned, to go straight. What others do, how is it my concern? It is their business, not mine."

This is the worst of all slaveries!

Here, it is said: "One must not enter on this path, far vaster and more arduous than most ways of yoga, unless one is sure of the psychic call and of one's readiness to go through to the end." Does this mean, Mother, that those who are accepted or those who are here in this Ashram are sure to go through and succeed?

Excuse me! But there is... I don't exactly know the proportion,

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but still it is certainly not most of the people here who are doing yoga. They happen to be here for many reasons; but those who have taken the resolution to do yoga, sincerely, do not form the majority. And as I told you, for you, children, those of you who have come here as children, how could you at the moment have even the least idea of what yoga is and come for the yoga? It is impossible. For all those who have come quite small, there is an age when the problem comes up; it is then that you must reflect, and then at that time I ask them. Well, have I asked you often about it? Since I am giving you these lessons, I speak to you about the thing, but it is very rarely that I have taken you individually and asked you, “Do you want to do it or not?” — Only those who have within themselves, who have had an impulsion, a kind of instinct, who have come and said, “Yes, I want to do yoga.” Then it is finished. But I tell them, “Good, these are the conditions, this is how it is. And you know, it is not something easy. You have to start with an inner certitude that you are here for that and you want that; that’s enough.” You see, one may have a very good will, a life oriented towards a divine realisation, in any case, a kind of more or less superficial consecration to a divine work, *and not do yoga*.

To do Sri Aurobindo’s yoga is to want to transform oneself integrally, it is to have a single aim in life, such that nothing else exists any longer, that alone exists. And so one feels it clearly in oneself whether one wants it or not; but if one doesn’t, one can still have a life of goodwill, a life of service, of understanding; one can labour for the Work to be accomplished more easily — all that — one can do many things. But between this and doing yoga there is a great difference.

And to do yoga you must want it consciously, you must know what it is, to begin with. You must know what it is, you must take a resolution about it; but once you have taken the resolution, you must no longer flinch. That is why you must take it in full knowledge of the thing. You must know what you are deciding upon when you say, “I want to do yoga”; and that is

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why I don't think that I have ever pressed you from this point of view. I can speak to you about the thing. Oh! I tell you a lot about it, you are here for me to speak to you about it; but individually it is only to those who have come saying, "Yes, in any case I have my idea about the yoga and want to do it"; it is good.

And then for them it's something different, and the conditions of life are different, specially inwardly. Specially within, things change.

There is always a consciousness there acting constantly to rectify the situation, which puts you all the time in the presence of obstacles which prevent you from advancing, make you bump against your own errors and your own blindnesses. And this acts only for those who have decided to do the yoga. For others the Consciousness acts like a light, a knowledge, a protection, a force of progress, so that they may reach their maximum capacities and be able to develop as far as possible in an atmosphere as favourable as possible — but leaving them completely free in their choice.

The decision must come from within. Those who come consciously for the yoga, knowing what yoga is, well, their conditions of living here are... outwardly there is no difference but inwardly there is a very great difference. There is a kind of absoluteness in the consciousness, which does not let them deviate from the path: the errors one commits become immediately visible with consequences strong enough for one not to be able to make any mistake about it, and things become very serious. But it is not often like that.

All of you, my children — I may tell you this, I have repeated it to you and still repeat it — live in an exceptional liberty. Outwardly there are a few limitations, because, as there are many of us and we don't have the whole earth at our disposal, we are obliged to submit to a certain discipline to a certain extent, so that there may not be too great a disorder; but inwardly you live in a marvellous liberty: no social constraint, no moral constraint, no intellectual constraint, no rule, nothing, nothing

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but a light which is there. If you want to profit by it, you profit by it; if you don't want to, you are free not to.

But the day you make a choice — when you have done it in all sincerity and have felt within yourself a radical decision — the thing is different. There is the light and the path to be followed, quite straight, and you must not deviate from it. It fools no one, you know; yoga is not a joke. You must know what you are doing when you choose it. But when you choose it, you must hold on to it. You have no longer the right to vacillate. You must go straight ahead. There!

All that I ask for is a will to do well, an effort for progress and the wish to be a little better in life than ordinary human beings. You have grown up, developed under conditions which are exceptionally luminous, conscious, harmonious, and full of goodwill; and in response to these conditions you should be in the world an expression of this light, this harmony, this goodwill. This would already be very good, very good.

To do the yoga, this yoga of transformation which, of all things, is the most arduous — it is only if one feels that one has come here for that (I mean here upon earth) and that one has to do nothing else but that, and that it is the only reason of one's existence — even if one has to toil hard, suffer, struggle, it is of no importance — “This is what I want, and nothing else” — then it is different. Otherwise I shall say, “Be happy and be good, and that's all that is asked of you. Be good, in the sense of being understanding, knowing that the conditions in which you have lived are exceptional, and try to live a higher, more noble, more true life than the ordinary one, so as to allow a little of this consciousness, this light and its goodness to express itself in the world. It would be very good.” There we are.

But once you have set foot on the path of yoga, you must have a resolution of steel and walk straight on to the goal, whatever the cost.

There!

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Mother reads from *Lights on Yoga*, “The Goal”.

Sweet Mother, what is “dynamic realisation”?

It is the realisation which is expressed in action. There is a realisation in inaction like that of those who enter into contemplations from which they don't come out, and who don't move; and then there is a dynamic realisation which transforms all your action, all your movements, all your way of being, your character. In the first case one's outer being remains the same, nothing changes, and usually it destroys all possibility of action, one can no longer do anything, one remains seated... In the second case, it changes everything, your character, your way of being, your way of acting, all your actions and even your surroundings, and finally all your existence, your total being: this is dynamic realisation, with the transformation of the body as its culmination.

Some people try to transform their body before even having transformed their intelligence, and this produces a complete displacement, it unbalances them totally. One must first transform his thought, all his mind, all his mental activity, organise it with higher knowledge; and at the same time one must transform his character, all the movements of the vital, all impulses, all reactions. And finally, when these two things are done, in any case up to a certain point, one can begin to think of transforming the cells of his body, but not begin at the end; one must begin at the beginning.

One can do... Sri Aurobindo says, doesn't he, that one can do everything at the same time, but the centre, the most important part, must first be transformed sufficiently before one can think of transforming his body... like some people who, for example,

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immediately want to change their food or even to stop eating, because, they say, finally when the Supermind comes one will no longer need to eat. So before the Supermind has come they want to begin by what will happen; they stop eating, stop sleeping, and the result is that they fall very ill.

It is preferable at first to begin by receiving the Supermind in one's mind with a sufficient knowledge, and gradually come to transforming all the rest.

Sweet Mother, what is "the dynamic side"?

It is the same thing. It is this side of the yoga.

There are two aspects: an aspect which is static and a preparation, and a dynamic aspect which is an aspect of transformation, of action. Dynamic means energetic; it means propulsion, action.

What does "the negative side" and "the positive side of experience" mean?

Ah, my child, you have certain faults, you know, things which prevent you from progressing. So, the negative side is to try and get rid of your defects. There are things which you have to be, to become, qualities which you must build in yourself in order to realise; so this side of construction is the positive side.

You have a defect, for example, a tendency not to speak the truth. Now this habit of falsehood, of not seeing or not speaking the truth, you fight against it by rejecting falsehood from your consciousness and endeavouring to eliminate that habit of not speaking the truth. For the thing to be done, you must build in yourself the habit of speaking only the truth. For the thing to be done, you must build in yourself the habit of perceiving and always telling the truth. One is negative: you reject a fault. The other is positive: you build the quality. It is like that.

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For everything it is like that. For example, you have somewhere in your being that kind of habit of revolt, ignorant, arrogant, obscure revolt, of refusing what comes from above. So, the negative side is to fight against this, to prevent it from expressing itself and reject it from your nature; and on the other side you must build positively surrender, understanding, consecration, self-giving and the sense of a complete collaboration with the divine forces. This is the positive side. Do you understand?

The same thing again: people who get angry... the habit of flying into a rage, of getting angry... one fights against that, refuses to get angry, rejects these vibrations of anger from one's being, but this must be replaced by an imperturbable calm, a perfect tolerance, an understanding of the point of view of others, a clear and tranquil vision, a calm decision — which is the positive side.

What is "the image of the dry coconut fruit"?

It is said that when one has realised (it is in here that he says it), one becomes like the dry coconut which moves in the shell, which is free inside, no longer attached to the envelope and moving freely within. That's what I have heard; it is the image for there being no attachment any more. You have seen this, when a coconut becomes completely dry, the nut inside is no longer fixed to the shell; and so when you move it, it moves inside; it is completely free, it is absolutely independent of the shell. So the image of the being is given: the ordinary physical consciousness is the shell; and so long as the Atman is not completely formed it is attached, it holds on, it is stuck to the shell, and it cannot be detached; but when it is completely formed it is absolutely free inside, it rolls freely in the shell without being fixed to it. It must be this image.

Sweet Mother, what does this mean: "...one must transfer the allegiance of the Purusha from the lower Prakriti..."

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You don't know what this means?

In the ordinary case, of the ordinary being and ordinary life, the Purusha is subjected to Prakriti, to the external Nature, he is her slave. So Sri Aurobindo says that it is not enough to free oneself from this slavery. He begins that way: it is not enough to free oneself from the slavery; he must keep his allegiance, but instead of obeying Prakriti, he must obey the Divine Mother; that is, instead of obeying something which is lower than himself, he must obey what is higher. That is the sentence: transfer his allegiance from this to that.

Do you understand? No? Ah, it is probably someone who wrote to him saying that he wanted his Purusha to be completely free from allegiance to Prakriti. So he answered: No, that's not enough; if you free it, it is only half the work; your allegiance must be there, but instead of being related to Prakriti, it must exist for the Divine Mother. And then later he explains the difference. There is an entire passage there in which he says that the Divine Mother should not be identified with Prakriti. Naturally there is something of the Divine Mother there, because something of the Divine Mother is behind everything. But one must not think that Prakriti is the Divine Mother.

(Nolini) It is the negative and positive side — as Tara asked — of allegiance to Prakriti.

Allegiance to Prakriti, yes, it's true. To get rid of this allegiance to Prakriti is the negative side of the development; one frees himself from his allegiance to Prakriti, but one must take a step further and have the positive side of being surrendered to the Divine Mother.

The last sentence: "...in the Truth-Creation the law is that of a constant unfolding without any Pralaya." What is this constant unfolding?

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The Truth-Creation... it is the last line? (*Mother consults the book*) I think we have already spoken about this several times. It has been said that in the process of creation, there is the movement of creation followed by a movement of preservation and ending in a movement of disintegration or destruction; and even it has been repeated very often: "All that begins must end", etc., etc.

In fact in the history of our universe there have been six consecutive periods which began by a creation, were prolonged by a force of preservation and ended by a disintegration, a destruction, a return to the Origin, which is called Pralaya; and that is why this tradition is there. But it has been said that the seventh creation would be a progressive creation, that is, after the starting-point of the creation, instead of its being simply followed by a preservation, it would be followed by a progressive manifestation which would express the Divine more and more completely, so that no disintegration and return to the Origin would be necessary. And it has been announced that the period we are in is precisely the seventh, that is, it would not end by a Pralaya, a return to the Origin, a destruction, a disappearance, but that it would be replaced by a constant progress, because it would be a more and more perfect unfolding of the divine Origin in its creation.

And this is what Sri Aurobindo says. He speaks of a constant unfolding, that is, the Divine manifests more and more completely; more and more perfectly, in a progressive creation. It is the nature of this progression which makes the return to the Origin, the destruction no longer necessary. All that does not progress disappears, and that is why physical bodies die, it's because they are not progressive; they are progressive up to a certain moment, then there they stop and most often they remain stable for a certain time, and then they begin to decline, and then disappear. It's because the physical body, physical matter as it is at present is not plastic enough to be able to progress constantly. But it is not impossible to make it sufficiently plastic

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for the perfecting of the physical body to be such that it no longer needs disintegration, that is, death.

Only, this cannot be realised except by the descent of the Supermind which is a force higher than all those which have so far manifested and which will give the body a plasticity that will allow it to progress constantly, that is, to follow the divine movement in its unfolding.

Sweet Mother, I am mixing up things. Here it is written: "But one who has not mastered and lived the truths of Overmind cannot reach the supramental Truth."

Yes.

It is here that I am getting mixed up. Often you have said that the reign of Overmind is finished and that of the Supermind is to come, and that one doesn't need to go through the same experiences of the Overmind, because that's already done.

What is he saying? Pavitra, do you understand what he is saying?

(Pavitra) Mother, you have said several times that the reign of the Overmind is finished and now it is the reign of the Supermind.

Yes, in a way, yes.

Therefore it is not necessary to pass through the experiences of the Overmind to reach the Supermind.

I have said that there was no need to pass through the experiences of the Overmind in order to have the supramental experiences? Have I ever said such a thing?

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I don't say that you have said that, but perhaps I have understood it like that.

Ah, well! In any case I don't think so. I don't know if I have said it, but I don't think so, because we are in a transitional period. It is absolutely certain that, in a general way, it is still the Overmind which is ruling and that if the Supermind comes, it's that it is only beginning to come and to have an influence, and that, in a period of transition, what Sri Aurobindo says here is absolutely obvious: If you understand nothing of the Overmind you will understand still less of the Supermind, and he has repeated, I don't know how often, that one must not try to leap to the highest summit without having climbed all the steps. Once again... when did I read... it's not so long ago... that it was necessary to climb all the steps to go to the top? You can't take a leap and neglect all the rest. It is not possible. You can do it quickly. What can happen is that what took several lifetimes can be done in a few years or even perhaps in a few months; but you have to do it.

When we all have supramental bodies and when within ourselves we are in the supramental consciousness, we shall perhaps be able to manufacture little supramental beings who will not need to pass through these experiences! But it is only "when", it is not so at present. (*Laughter*)

One must not hope for things before they are done. They will be done, but a little later.

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Mother reads from *Lights on Yoga*, “Planes and Parts of the Being”.

How can one awaken his Yoga-shakti?

It depends on this: when one thinks that it is the most important thing in his life. That’s all.

Some people sit in meditation, concentrate on the base of the vertebral column and want it very much to awake, but that’s not enough. It is when truly it becomes the most important thing in one’s life, when all the rest seems to have lost all taste, all interest, all importance, when one feels within that one is born for this, that one is here upon earth for this, and that it is the only thing that truly counts, then that’s enough.

One can concentrate on the different centres; but sometimes one concentrates for so long, with so much effort, and has no result. And then one day something shakes you, you feel that you are going to lose your footing, you have to cling on to something; then you cling within yourself to the idea of union with the Divine, the idea of the divine Presence, the idea of the transformation of the consciousness, and you aspire, you want, you try to organise your feelings, movements, impulses around this. And it comes.

Some people have recommended all kinds of methods; probably these were methods which had succeeded in their case; but to tell the truth, one must find one’s own method, it is only after having done the thing that one knows how it should be done, not before.

If one knows it beforehand, one makes a mental construction and risks greatly living in his mental construction, which is an illusion; because when the mind builds certain conditions

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and then they are realised, there are many chances of there being mostly pure mental construction which is not the experience itself but its image. So for all these truly spiritual experiences I think it is wiser to have them before knowing them. If one knows them, one imitates them, one doesn't have them, one imagines oneself having them; whereas if one knows nothing — how things are and how they ought to happen, what should happen and how it will come about — if one knows nothing about all this, then by keeping very still and making a kind of inner sorting out within one's being, one can suddenly have the experience, and then later knows what one has had. It is over, and one knows how it has to be done when one has done it — afterwards. Like that it is sure.

One may obviously make use of his imagination, imagine the Kundalini and try to pull it upwards. But one can also tell himself tales like this. I have had so many instances of people who described their experiences to me exactly as they are described in books, knowing all the words and putting down all the details, and then I asked them just a little question like that, casually: that if they had had the experience they should have known or felt a certain thing, and as this was not in the books, they could not answer.

Sweet Mother, what is the significance of the thousand-petalled lotus?

That is how they describe it. It is because there's a centre there, very, very complicated. I think it means the countless powers of thought, it is the multiplicity of knowledge in all its forms. It must be that. Why, this is still another instance: people who have read, studied, and have the experience afterwards, well, they always describe it like that, with names they have picked up in books and with descriptions of the lotuses as they are given in books; but those who have the spontaneous experience without having read or learnt anything before having it, they describe it

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altogether vividly, with an individual reality, so to say. Each one approaches the experience in his own way. When these centres awake... it is a fact that there are centres, and it's a fact that they awake, and it's a fact that this changes vastly the whole working of the consciousness and energy, but the description, if it is spontaneous and sincere, is different for everyone. One can have the feeling of a similarity with something, but giving a fixed and precise description of what happens is always an intervention of the mind.

This phenomenon is very real, concrete, it is felt with all the reality and intensity of even a physical phenomenon. But each person describes it with a form particular to himself, except as I say, when he has read and studied, and his brain is full of all that is written in books; then automatically what he has read gives a form to his experience, and this takes away from it something of the spontaneity which gives such an impression of being sincere and truthful; it becomes a mental construction. If you have read and read much that it is like a serpent which is coiled up, well, quite naturally when you concentrate and try to awaken it, you see a serpent which is coiled, because you think about it like that. If you are told about a thousand-petalled lotus, you see a thousand-petalled lotus. But it is a mental superimposition upon the fact of the experience itself. But the feeling of something that's innumerable, that's one and innumerable at the same time, and that kind of impression of something opening, awakening, beginning to vibrate, responding to the forces and giving you an intensity of light, of understanding, of opening to higher regions, this is... the substance of the experience. Yet when you begin to describe it with images which you have found in books, it is as though suddenly you were making it either superficial — fossilised, so to say — or artificial or even insincere.

Always the most interesting cases for me have been those of people who had read nothing but had a very ardent aspiration and came to me saying, "Something funny has happened to me, I had this extraordinary experience, what can it mean truly?"

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And then they describe a movement, a vibration, a force, a light, whatever it might be, it depends on each one, and they describe this, that it happened like that and came like that, and then this happened and then that, and what does it all mean, all this? Then here one is on the right side. One knows that it is not an imagined experience, that it is a sincere, spontaneous one, and this always has a power of transformation much greater than the experience that was brought about by a mental knowledge.

Then, Mother, this means that it is better not to read?

On condition that one truly has within himself the ardour of aspiration. If you are born for this, for the yoga, and this is the thing which dominates all your existence, that you feel, yes, before knowing anything, that you need to find something which is in you, then sometimes a word is enough, a conversation which simply orients you — it is enough. But for those who are seeking, who grope, who are not absolutely sure, who are pulled this way and that, have many interests in life, are not steady, stabilised in their will for realisation, it is very good to read, because it puts them in touch with the subject, it gives them some interest in the thing.

What I mean is that every definite mental formation always gives a particular colouring to the experience. As for example, with all people brought up in a certain religion their experiences will always be coloured by this religion; and in fact, to reach the very source of the thing one must free oneself from the external formation.

But there is a kind of reading which awakens in you an interest in the thing and can help you in the first seekings. Usually, even if one has had experiences one needs a contact of thought or idea with the thing so that the effort may be crystallized more consciously. But the more one knows, the more one must be absolutely sincere in his experience, that is, he must not use the formative power of his mind to imagine and so create the

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experience in himself. From the point of view of orientation it can be useful; but from the point of view of the experience, it takes away from it its dynamic value, it has not the intensity of an experience which comes because the moral and spiritual conditions necessary for it to occur have been fulfilled. There is the whole mental conditioning which is added and which takes away something of the spontaneity. All this is a matter of proportion. Each one must find the exact amount he needs, how much of reading, how much meditation, how much concentration, how much... It is different for each one.

Sweet Mother, here it is written: "It is part of the foundation of Yoga to become conscious of the great complexity of our nature, see the different forces that move it and get over it a control of directing knowledge." Are these forces different for each person?

Yes. The composition is completely different, otherwise everybody would be the same. There are not two beings with an identical combination; between the different parts of the being and the composition of these parts the proportion is different in each individual. There are people, primitive men, people like the yet undeveloped races or the degenerated ones whose combinations are fairly simple; they are still complicated, but comparatively simple. And there are people absolutely at the top of the human ladder, the élite of humanity; their combinations become so complicated that a very special discernment is needed to find the relations between all these things.

There are beings who carry in themselves thousands of different personalities, and then each one has its own rhythm and alternation, and there is a kind of combination; sometimes there are inner conflicts, and there is a play of activities which are rhythmic and with alternations of certain parts which come to the front and then go back and again come to the front. But when one takes all that, it makes such complicated combinations that

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some people truly find it difficult to understand what is going on in themselves; and yet these are the ones most capable of a complete, coordinated, conscious, organised action; but their organisation is infinitely more complicated than that of primitive or undeveloped men who have two or three impulses and four or five ideas, and who can arrange all this very easily in themselves and seem to be very co-ordinated and logical because there is not very much to organise. But there are people truly like a multitude, and so that gives them a plasticity, a fluidity of action and an extraordinary complexity of perception, and these people are capable of understanding a considerable number of things, as though they had at their disposal a veritable army which they move according to circumstance and need; and all this is inside them. So when these people, with the help of yoga, the discipline of yoga, succeed in centralising all these beings around the central light of the divine Presence, they become powerful entities, precisely because of their complexity. So long as this is not organised they often give the impression of an incoherence, they are almost incomprehensible, one can't manage to understand why they are like that, they are so complex. But when they have organised all these beings, that is, put each one in its place around the divine centre, then truly they are terrific, for they have the capacity of understanding almost everything and doing almost everything because of the multitude of entities they contain, of which they are constituted. And the nearer one is to the top of the ladder, the more it is like that, and consequently the more difficult it is to organise one's being; because when you have about a dozen elements, you can quickly compass and organise them, but when you have thousands of them, it is difficult.

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Mother reads from *Lights on Yoga*, “Planes and Parts of the Being”.

Sweet Mother, has the vital nature of man come out from his true vital being?

Come out? What do you call coming out? You mean that first there was the true vital being and that this expresses itself in the physical nature, the earth nature, by the vital which we see? Yes!

Mother, why is it so contradictory?

Why is the external world so total a contradiction of the divine world? It is exactly the same thing. It is like that.

The vital being, the true vital being which Sri Aurobindo describes, is the vital being which is in contact with the Divine, which is entirely surrendered to the Divine and is His instrument; whereas in the ordinary earth consciousness the vital being and also the physical being do not at all belong to the Divine, they think they belong to themselves, and the only thing that counts is their own little person; and that is why everything is like this. All the disorder in the universe is due to that.

Sweet Mother, here it is written: “there is... a true physical being.” What does this mean?

There is a physical Nature which is perfectly harmonious, which has an absolutely... how to put it... yes, harmonious working, without any disorder, without disequilibrium, without any rupture of harmony, which would be expressed, if it existed upon earth, by a perfect health, a growing force, a continuous

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progress; and then all that one would like to obtain from one's body one would obtain; and this can go as far as an almost unimaginable progress of perfection.

The physical state as we see it with all its disharmonies, its weaknesses, its uglinesses, is the same deformation as that which has changed the higher vital, the true vital, into the kind of vital we see. And this comes from the same cause: it is cut off from its Origin, with an acute sense of separation which makes one live in an absolutely obscure consciousness which has become totally ignorant, instead of living constantly in the consciousness of one's Origin. Now, to ask why it is like that is to ask too much.

That's all?

I didn't understand very well, Sweet Mother.

You haven't understood what the true physical is, because it is not a question of understanding. One is not conscious of it because one is not inside it, one doesn't live in it. But can't you conceive of a body which would be perfectly beautiful, perfectly harmonious, which would function perfectly well and would never be ill, never tired, and would be in a state of constant progress? First it would become taller and taller until it reaches its maximum height, and then it would become stronger and stronger, more and more skilful, more and more conscious, and always in a perfect harmony: never any illness and never any fatigue, never any error, making no mistakes, knowing exactly at each moment what ought to be done and why.

Mother, it is said that there is a true being... but usually when one speaks of the physical it means material, concerning the body, doesn't it?

For the moment there is no true being in the most material domain. It is only a kind of subtle prototype which is not materially realised.

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(*To another child*) You have something to ask?

Mother, are Time and Space particular only to the physical world or to other worlds also?

As there are forms, there is necessarily a Time, a Space, but it is not at all the same as the physical. It is neither the same Time nor the same Space.

For example, as soon as you come to the vital there is a Time and Space which are similar to the physical but without that fixity and hardness and irremediability which are here. That is, for instance, in the vital a strong intelligent will has an immediate action; here, in the physical, it takes sometimes extremely long to be realised, an entire process has to be followed. In the vital it is direct, the will acts directly on the circumstances, and if it is truly of a very strong kind, it is instantaneous. But there is still a Space, that is, one has the impression of moving to go from one place to another, and that necessarily, as one moves, a certain time intervenes; but it is an extremely short time compared with physical time.

On the mental plane the notion of Time disappears almost totally. For example, you are in your mental consciousness, you think of someone or something or of a place, and immediately you are there. There is no need of any time between the thought and the realisation. It is only when the mind is mingled with the vital that the notion of time is introduced; and if they go down into the physical, before a mental conception can be realised a whole process is necessary. You do not have a direct mental action on matter. For instance, if you think of someone who lives in Calcutta, well, physically you have to take a plane and some hours must pass before you can be there; while mentally if you are here and think of someone in Calcutta, instantaneously you are there with him. Instantaneously, you see. But if you go out in the vital from your body and want to go somewhere, well, you have the feeling of moving, and of the time it takes you to reach

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the place you are going to. But it is incomparably fast in relation to the physical, to the time necessary to do things physically.

Only right at the top of the ladder, when one reaches what could be called the centre of the universe, the centre and origin of the universe, everything is instantaneous. The past, present and future are all contained in a total and simultaneous consciousness, that is, what has always been and what will be are as though united in a single instant, a single beat of the universe, and it is only there that one goes out of Time and Space.

Mother, you said that if we think mentally of something we are immediately in the presence of that thing, but if, for example, we think mentally of something higher, of the Divine, for example...

Yes.

Are we immediately in His Presence?

Yes, but only that part of the thought, not your body. That's just what I said. In the mental domain it is like that; if one concentrates on the Divine and thinks of the Divine, the part... I don't say the whole thought, because thought is multiple and divided, but the part which is sincerely concentrated on the Divine is with Him. It does some good but not very much when this part is mixed with all the others which think of hundreds of different things at the same time, or when it goes down into the body, is all tied up precisely to that frightful slowness of material things, and when we have to take so many steps only to go from here to the door.

In the vital with a leap one can be there; mentally there is no need even of a leap.

On the psychic plane is there a past, present and future?

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In the psychic? Yes, you have even the consciousness of all the lives you have lived. When you enter into contact with the psychic you become conscious of all the lives you have lived, it keeps the absolutely living memory of all the events in which the psychic took part — not the whole life, not that one can tell little stories to oneself: that first one was a monkey and then later something a little higher, and so on, the cave-man... no, no stories like that. But all the events of former lives in which the psychic participated are preserved, and when one enters into conscious contact with his psychic being this can be called up like a sort of cinema. But it has no continuity except in lives in which the psychic is absolutely conscious, active, permanently active, that is, constantly associated with the consciousness; so naturally, being constantly associated with the consciousness, it consciously remembers everything that has happened in the real life of the person, and the memories — when one follows these things — the memories of his psychic being are more and more coordinated and closer and closer to what could be a physical memory if there were one, in any case of all the intellectual and emotional elements of life, and of some physical events when it was possible for this being to manifest in the outer consciousness; then, at these moments, the whole set of physical circumstances in which one was is kept absolutely intact in the consciousness.

Mother, here Sri Aurobindo speaks of “the psychic behind supporting all”. What does this mean?

Well, yes, the psychic is behind the whole organisation, this triple organisation of human life and consciousness, the psychic is behind and supports it by its consciousness which is an immortal one. It is because of the psychic that we have so clear a sense of continuity. Otherwise if you compare what you now are with what you were when you were three, obviously you couldn't recognise yourself in any way, either physically or vitally or mentally. There is no resemblance of any kind. But behind there

is the psychic which supports the development, the growth of the being and gives this continuity of consciousness, makes one feel that he is the same being even while being absolutely different, absolutely different. If later one observes himself sufficiently, he can see that the things he understood and could do at that time are things which seem to him absolutely inconceivable now, and that he could never do a similar thing because he is no longer that person at all. And yet, because within there was the psychic consciousness which is immortal, one has the feeling that it is always the same being which was there and continues to be there and will continue to be there with more or less progressive and more or less conscious changes.

Mother, is the orientation of an individual's life directed by the psychic?

Yes. Absolutely unconsciously for the individual, most of the time; but it is the psychic which organises his existence — only in what may be called the main lines, because for intervening in the details there would have to be a conscious union between the outer being, that is, the vital and physical being, and the psychic being, but usually this does not exist. So externally, in the details... for example, there was someone who in deep perplexity said to me, “Well, if it is the psychic being or rather the Divine in the psychic who directs our life, is it He who decides the number of pieces of sugar I put in my tea-cup?” That was the question, verbatim. So the answer had to be, “No, because it is not a detailed intervention of this kind.”

It is as when you push your fist into a heap of iron filings or saw-dust, all the infinitesimal little elements of the iron filings or saw-dust are organised to take on the form of your fist, but they do not do this either deliberately or consciously. It is through the work of the consciousness which pushes that this kind of thing happens. There is no decision that each element is going to be exactly in this place, like that; it is the effect of

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the energy which has pushed the fist that organises the elements. But that's how it is. There is the psychic consciousness at work in life, organising all the circumstances of your life but not with a deliberate choice of the details; and in fact very few things are deliberate and conscious in the organisation of the physical life of human beings. Most of the time that's what happens. If you ask someone, "Why have you done this?" — "That's how it happened." It is always like that: "That's how it happened." At least seventy-five times out of a hundred. Only, one is so used to going, moving, and doing things like that that one doesn't even notice it. But if one begins to observe himself, he sees that it is true. There are very few things which were the result of a clear and willed decision, very few, only what one considers important things, and even here there is a wide margin. The amount of inconstancy that's mixed with the physical consciousness is tremendous, but because we are used to it we do not notice it. But as soon as you begin to analyse, look, study, you are terrified. How many times you are just faced with a question. You see, you do things automatically, by habit, perhaps sometimes by choice — sometimes, but suddenly you find yourself facing an absolutely insignificant detail: "Should I do this or should I do that?" Simply this. You can take very small things like... you are in the course of eating, and you ask yourself, "Should I continue eating or should I stop?" How many times can you take a motivated and conscious decision? And you suddenly realise, "Why, I know nothing about it", and "I don't know; I can do this, I can do that; I can do that and that and that. But what will choose in me?" Unless you have mental constructions. But then if you have mental constructions ruling your life, you don't even ask yourself these questions, you live like an automaton, in a habitual routine you have made for yourself. But it's not just once, it happens a thousand times daily.

For example, you are in contact with someone, you have very good feelings for this person; you find yourself in a slightly difficult circumstance and want to do the best possible. If you act

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spontaneously, there is no problem before you because you act like that, one thing trailing another, and without reflecting. And you consciously want to do the best... On what will you base your judgment? What knowledge will allow you to decide: "I must do this or I must do that, I must say this or I must say that or I must not say anything" — all the countless possibilities which come before you? And on what will you base your judgment? If you look at it sincerely, you will find out that at each step you do not know.

It is only if you have been in the habit of going within yourself, of referring to the inner psychic consciousness and letting it decide in yourself what you want to do, that you do it with certitude, without hesitation, without a question, nothing. You know that this is what must be done and there is no question about it; but that's the only case. Therefore it is only when you let your psychic guide you consciously, constantly, that you are able to do consciously and constantly the right thing; but that's the only case.

In the other case, if you have made it a habit to study and observe, you have before you all the little things of life which recur constantly. You don't want to live mechanically by a kind of habit, you want to live consciously, making use of your will. Well, at every minute you are facing a problem which you can't solve, I mean purely physically. Take a certain difficulty you have in your body — what we call a disorder — which is expressed by an uneasiness or an indisposition; it is not an illness, it is an indisposition, it is an uneasiness, there is something that's not working very well. Then if you don't have the psychic knowledge which makes you directly do the thing which ought to be done and without any argument, if you want to refer the thing to your mind and to what you consider to be the knowledge you have, then... Take a case which lies in the field of medicine, that is, "Should I do this or that, take this medicine or that, change the diet, take this food or that?"... Then you look. If you have never known more than a certain number

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of very primary principles, your choice is very easy, but if by chance you have studied a little and know if it be only the different medical systems of treatment... there are the systems of different countries, the different systems of medicines, there are, you know, allopathy, homeopathy, this one and that; so one tells you one thing, another tells you another. You know people who have told you, "Don't do this, do that", others who say, "Above all don't do this, do that", and so on, and so you find yourself facing the problem and ask yourself, "Well, with all that, what do I know myself, what am I going to decide? I know nothing."

There is only one thing which knows in you, that's your psychic; *it* makes no mistake, it will immediately, instantaneously tell you, if you obey it without a word and without your ideas and arguments, it will make you do the right thing. But all the rest... you are lost. And for everything: what are you going to study, what are you not going to study, what work are you going to do, what path are you going to take? But then there are all the possibilities which come in, all that you have either studied or met in life, all the suggestions you have received from all sides, which are there, like that, dancing around you. And with what will you decide? I am speaking of people who are absolutely sincere and have no preconceived ideas, prejudices, established rules which they follow in a mechanical routine, without endeavouring to know the truth at all, and for whom their mental construction is the truth. Then it is so simple, one goes straight on his path, bumps his nose against the wall but doesn't notice it until the nose is smashed. But otherwise it is terribly difficult.

This was what Sri Aurobindo meant when he said that one lived constantly in ignorance and that unless the mind of ignorance is replaced by the mind of light one could not follow the true path, and that this was the indispensable preparation before any integral transformation could take place.

That's all? (*To a child*) You have something to say? No?

Well then, it is very late.

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Mother reads from *Lights on Yoga*, “Planes and Parts of the Being”.

Sweet Mother, here it is written: “Finally the soul or psychic being retires into the psychic world to rest there till a new birth is close.” Then, Mother, what happens to the central being afterwards?

This depends absolutely on the different instances. We said that the central being and the psychic being are the same thing but the part which stays and is in the Divine stays and is in the Divine. The psychic is the delegate of this Divine in the earth life, for the growth on earth. But the part of the central being which is identified with the Divine remains identified with the Divine and does not change. Even during life it is identified with the Divine, and after death it remains what it was in life, for it this makes no difference. It is the psychic being which has alternations of experience and assimilation, experience and assimilation. But the Jivatman is in the Divine and remains in the Divine, and doesn't move from there; and it is not progressive. It is in the Divine, it is identified with the Divine, it remains identified with the Divine, not separated. It makes no difference to it, whether there is an earthly body or not.

Then, Sweet Mother, is everyone's central being the same?

No, for we are told that it is identified in multiplicity. It is the eternal truth of each being. From one point of view they are identical, from another they are multiple; because the truth of each being is an individual truth, but it is identified with the

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Divine. It is outside the manifestation but it is the origin of the manifestation. It is a unity which is not a uniformity.

It is indeed the same thing that I was explaining last time; each one is different and yet each one is identical. If you approach the Divine from various angles, He seems to you different, because of the angle from which you approach Him. It is the same thing for the Manifested. But in this angle it is all the same, if I may say so, the complete unity of the Divine which one attains. It is the meeting point which is different but beyond the meeting point it is a single totality.

It is very difficult to put it in words. But it is an experience which one can have. It is as though there were innumerable doors or paths by which one could reach the Divine. So when one approaches he does so from a certain angle, he enters by a certain door, but as soon as he has gone right in, he realises that it is a single oneness, it is only the path leading to it or the particular approach which is different.

Sweet Mother, "the Jivatman ... the moment it presides over the dynamics of the manifestation, knows itself as one centre of the multiple Divine, not as the Parameshwara."

That's exactly what I have just said. I am not going to begin all over again.

What?

Sweet Mother, when Sri Aurobindo was in Alipore,¹ Vivekananda came for fifteen days and explained something special to him. What part of Vivekananda was it, the psychic being or the atman?

¹ Sri Aurobindo was arrested for sedition on the 1st of May, 1908 and detained in Alipore jail for a year. The British Government, taking its stand on his articles and the reports of his speeches, held him in fact responsible for the entire revolutionary movement.

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It could very well be his mind. It could very well be the mind because he had unified his mind around his psychic being. Therefore his mind could continue to exist indefinitely. It partakes of the immortality of the psychic being. It could very well be his mind.

Mother, can one enter into communion with his Jivatman without the ego being dissolved?

That's what Sri Aurobindo says. He says that the ego survives the physical life, the bodily life; this is perfectly correct. There is a vital ego and a mental ego which can continue to exist for quite a long time. But one can have experiences without the ego being dissolved. Otherwise who would have experiences? How many people are there who have dissolved their ego? There can't be very many, I think.

When one has an experience it is as though one went through his ego to have his experience, and one can, if he continues, end up by diminishing the hardness — the obscurity and hardness — of the ego, making it more and more plastic and permeable by multiplying the experiences. That's something one feels very clearly, that one passes through something like a hard shell which prevents him from having the experience; one passes through, has the experience, and when he comes back, he again has the impression of going through a shell which shuts him in, imprisons him for a long time. That's how it is. But those who have succeeded in entering consciously into contact with their psychic being can keep this contact...

To pass completely to the other side of the ego so that it no longer intervenes, a fairly long time is needed, it doesn't happen at all immediately. And then you feel that thing which, seen from within, suffocates you; and seen from outside it has an insignificant consistency, but it prevents the being from feeling integrally the intensity of the experience; it is like a layer which diminishes the intensity of the vibrations and the intensity of the

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consciousness, and you feel that. You feel it as something very fixed and very opaque. Many people certainly have experiences but they don't remember them; that's because when they pass through this layer of the ego, they forget everything, they lose everything, lose the memory of their experience. But when one has formed the habit, perhaps the memory is a little dimmed, hasn't the intensity and exactness, but it remains.

Is that all? Nothing else?

Mother, the other day you said that when one thinks of someone or something, one part of this thought goes there at once.

Yes.

For example, I think of someone who is in Calcutta, then if my thought goes there, I ought to have the knowledge of...

Thought is only conscious of thought in the mental world. So you can become very conscious of the mental atmosphere of Calcutta, of the thought of the person to whom you go, but of nothing else, absolutely nothing that has to do with the vital and physical.

To be conscious of the vital you must go there in the vital, and this is already an exteriorisation which leaves the body at least more than three-fourths in trance. And if you want to see things physically, you must go out in your most material subtle physical and then here you leave your body in a cataleptic state; and these things are not to be done without someone being with you who understands them and can guard you.

But the mental exteriorisation occurs constantly. It puts you in contact only with the mental world. Perhaps if you are very conscious and the person you go to see is very conscious, and if at that moment he has formed opinions or ideas about something

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happening in Calcutta, then you can become conscious of the ideas of this person on what is happening — indirectly — but you are not directly conscious of the thing.

Mother, when one imagines something, does it not exist?

When you imagine something, it means that you make a mental formation which may be close to the truth or far from the truth — it also depends upon the quality of your formation. You make a mental formation and there are people who have such a power of formation that they succeed in making what they imagine real. There are not many of these but there are some. They imagine something and their formation is so well made and so powerful that it succeeds in being realised. These are creators; there are not many of them but there are some.

If one thinks of someone who doesn't exist or who is dead?

Ah! What do you mean? What have you just said? Someone who doesn't exist or someone who is dead? These are two absolutely different things.

I mean someone who is dead.

Someone who is dead!

If this person has remained in the mental domain, you can find him immediately. Naturally if he is no longer in the mental domain, if he is in the psychic domain, to think of him is not enough. You must know how to go into the psychic domain to find him. But if he has remained in the mental domain and you think of him, you can find him immediately, and not only that, but you can have a mental contact with him and a kind of mental vision of his existence.

The mind has a capacity of vision of its own and it is not the

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same vision as with these eyes, but it is a vision, it is a perception in forms. But this is not imagination. It has nothing to do with imagination.

Imagination, for instance, is when you begin to picture to yourself an ideal being to whom you apply all your conceptions, and when you tell yourself, “Why, it should be like this, like that, its form should be like this, its thought like that, its character like that,” when you see all the details and build up the being. Now, writers do this all the time because when they write a novel, they imagine. There are those who take things from life but there are those who are imaginative, creators; they create a character, a personage and then put him in their book later. This is to imagine. To imagine, for example, a whole concurrence of circumstances, a set of events, this is what I call telling a story to oneself. But it can be put down on paper, and then one becomes a novelist. There are very different kinds of writers. Some imagine everything, some gather all sorts of observations from life and construct their book with them. There are a hundred ways of writing a book. But indeed some writers imagine everything from beginning to end. It all comes out of their head and they construct even their whole story without any support in things physically observed. This truly is imagination. But as I say, if they are very powerful and have a considerable capacity for creation, it is possible that one day or other there will be a physical human being who realises their creation. This too is true.

What do you suppose imagination is, eh? Have you never imagined anything, you?

And what happens?

All that one imagines.

You mean that you imagine something and it happens like that, eh? Or it is in a dream...

What is the function, the use of the imagination?

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If one knows how to use it, as I said, one can create for oneself his own inner and outer life; one can build his own existence with his imagination, if one knows how to use it and has a power. In fact it is an elementary way of creating, of forming things in the world. I have always felt that if one didn't have the capacity of imagination he would not make any progress. Your imagination always goes ahead of your life. When you think of yourself, usually you imagine what you want to be, don't you, and this goes ahead, then you follow, then it continues to go ahead and you follow. Imagination opens for you the path of realisation. People who are not imaginative — it is very difficult to make them move; they see just what is there before their nose, they feel just what they are moment by moment and they cannot go forward because they are clamped by the immediate thing. It depends a good deal on what one calls imagination. However...

Men of science must be having imagination!

A lot. Otherwise they would never discover anything. In fact, what is called imagination is a capacity to project oneself outside realised things and towards things realisable, and then to draw them by the projection. One can obviously have progressive and regressive imaginations. There are people who always imagine all the catastrophes possible, and unfortunately they also have the power of making them come. It's like the antennae going into a world that's not yet realised, catching something there and drawing it here. Then naturally it is an addition to the earth atmosphere and these things tend towards manifestation. It is an instrument which can be disciplined, can be used at will; one can discipline it, direct it, orientate it. It is one of the faculties one can develop in himself and render serviceable, that is, use it for definite purposes.

Sweet Mother, can one imagine the Divine and have the contact?

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Certainly if you succeed in imagining the Divine you have the contact, and you can have the contact with what you imagine, in any case. In fact it is absolutely impossible to imagine something which doesn't exist somewhere. You cannot imagine anything at all which doesn't exist somewhere. It is possible that it doesn't exist on the earth, it is possible that it's elsewhere, but it is impossible for you to imagine something which is not already contained in principle in the universe; otherwise it could not occur.

Then, Sweet Mother, this means that in the created universe nothing new is added?

In the created universe? Yes. The universe is progressive; we said that constantly things manifest, more and more. But for your imagination to be able to go and seek beyond the manifestation something which will be manifested, well, it may happen, in fact it does — I was going to tell you that it is in this way that some beings can cause considerable progress to be made in the world, because they have the capacity of imagining something that's not yet manifested. But there are not many. One must first be capable of going beyond the manifested universe to be able to imagine something which is not there. There are already many things which can be imagined.

What is our terrestrial world in the universe? A very small thing. Simply to have the capacity of imagining something which does not exist in the terrestrial manifestation is already very difficult, very difficult. For how many billions of years hasn't it existed, this little earth? And there have been no two identical things. That's much. It is very difficult to go out from the earth atmosphere with one's mind; one can, but it is very difficult. And then if one wants to go out, not only from the earth atmosphere but from the universal life!

To be able simply to enter into contact with the life of the earth in its totality from the formation of the earth until now, what can this mean? And then to go beyond this and enter into

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contact with universal life from its beginnings up to now... and then again to be able to bring something new into the universe, one must go still farther beyond.

Not easy!

That's all?

(*To the child*) Convinced?

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Mother reads from *Lights on Yoga*, “Planes and Parts of the Being”.

Now then!

Sweet Mother, what does “cosmic spirit and cosmic Nature” mean?

Universal. Cosmic is the synonym of universal.

But what does “cosmic spirit” mean?

Cosmic spirit? It is the cosmic spirit, it is the universal spirit, it is the spirit that’s in the whole universe. There is a universe. You know what the universe is? Well, this universe has a spirit, and this spirit is the cosmic spirit; this universe has a consciousness and its consciousness is the cosmic, universal consciousness.

One may very well imagine that the universe is only an entity in something which is still vaster, as the individual is only an entity in a much vaster totality. Now, each unit has its consciousness and its own spirit which contains all the others, as a group consciousness is made up of all the individual consciousnesses which constitute it and as a national consciousness is made up of all the individual consciousnesses which constitute it, and something more. The individual is only an element in the whole, even as the earth is a part of the solar system, and the solar system makes a part of all the systems of the universe. So just as there is an individual consciousness, there is a group consciousness and a consciousness of the system, a universal consciousness which is made up of the set of all the consciousnesses composing it,

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plus something, something — something more subtle. Just like you: you have lots of cells in your body; each cell has its own consciousness and you have a consciousness which is the consciousness of your total individuality, though made up of all these small cellular consciousnesses.

Mother, here it is written: "... there is a wall of separative ignorance between" the individual and the cosmic consciousness. Then how to break down this wall?

Get rid of the ignorance, enter the knowledge.

First of all you must know what I have just told you, that you are a part of the whole, that this whole is a part of a greater whole, and that this greater whole is a part of a still greater whole, right up to its forming one single totality. Once you know that, you begin to become aware that in reality there cannot be any separation between you and something greater than you of which you are a part. This is the beginning. Now, you must come to the point not only of thinking this but of feeling it and even living it, and then the wall of ignorance tumbles: one feels this unity everywhere and realises that he is only a more or less fragmentary part of a whole much vaster than he, which is the universe. Then one begins to have a more universal consciousness.

(Silence)

That's all?

Sweet Mother, what does to be possessed by the Divine mean?

You don't know? What do you think, that it is you who possess the Divine or the Divine who possesses you?

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What does it mean?

It means that the Divine enters into you and governs you, becomes the master of your consciousness and movements. This indeed is called being possessed by the Divine.

Sweet Mother, it is the separation of Sat, Chit and Ananda which has brought about ignorance, suffering. Then...

Why did they separate? (*Laughter*)

Probably they had no moral notions! (*Laughter*)

(Long silence)

It is probable that if they had not separated, there would have been no universe as we have it. It was perhaps a necessity. But what you are asking is how it was not foreseen that it would happen in this way. Perhaps it was foreseen. It could have turned out well, it turned out badly. There! There are accidents.

You know, so long as you want to apply your mental, moral notions to the creation of the universe, you will never understand anything about it, never. Because from all sides and in all ways it goes beyond these conceptions — conceptions of good and evil, and these things. All the mental, moral conceptions we have cannot explain the universe. And for this part of ourselves which indeed lives in a total ignorance, all that can be said is: “Things are like that because they are like that”, one can’t explain them, because the explanations one gives are those of ignorance and explain nothing at all.

The mind explains one thing by another, this other which needs to be explained is explained by another still, and that other which needs explanation is explained by another, and if you continue in this way you can go all round the universe and return to the starting-point without having explained anything

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at all. (*Laughter*) So you have to pierce a hole, rise in the air and see things in another way. Then like that one can begin to understand.

How to do it?

How to do it? (*Laughter*)

Aspiration is like an arrow, like this (*gesture*). So you aspire, want *very* earnestly to understand, know, enter into the truth. Yes? And then with that aspiration you do this (*gesture*). Your aspiration rises, rises, rises, rises straight up, very strong and then it strikes against a kind of... how to put it?... lid which is there, hard like iron and extremely thick, and it does not pass through. And then you say, "See, what's the use of aspiring? It brings nothing at all. I meet with something hard and cannot pass!" But you know about the drop of water which falls on the rock, it ends up by making a chasm: it cuts the rock from top to bottom. Your aspiration is a drop of water which, instead of falling, rises. So, by dint of rising, it beats, beats, beats, and one day it makes a hole, by dint of rising; and when it makes the hole suddenly it springs out from this lid and enters an immensity of light, and you say, "Ah, now I understand."

It's like that.

So one must be very persistent, very stubborn and have an aspiration which rises straight upwards, that is, which does not go roaming around here and there, seeking all kinds of things.

Only this: to understand, understand, understand, to learn to know, to be.

When one reaches the very top, there is nothing more to understand, nothing more to learn, one *is*, and it's when one *is* that one understands and knows.

Mother, when one understands, what is it in us that understands?

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It's the like that knows the like. So it is only because you carry the thing in yourself that you discover it. Because you understand very well that my story is an image, don't you, that all this is an image; it corresponds quite well with something, but it's an image all the same, because one can find it as well within as above, you see. It's only because we have physical notions about the different material planes, material dimensions; because when we understand, it is in another order of dimensions, absolutely. Now this other dimensional order does not correspond to space.

But you cannot understand and be something unless it is in you in some way or other or you are in it — it's the same thing, isn't it? However, to make you understand more easily, I can say it's because it is in you, because it's a part of your consciousness, somewhere, otherwise you could never become aware of it. If one did not carry the Divine within oneself, in the essence of one's being, one could never become aware of the Divine; it would be an impossible venture. And then if you reverse the problem, the moment you conceive and feel in some way or other, or even, to begin with, admit that the Divine is in you, as well as you are in the Divine, then already this opens the door to realisation, just a little, not much — slightly ajar. Then if later the aspiration comes, the intense need to know and to be, then that intense need widens the opening until one can creep in. Then when one has crept in, one becomes aware of what he is. And that's exactly what Sri Aurobindo says, that one has forgotten, that due to this separation of Sat, Chit, Ananda, forgetfulness comes, forgetfulness of what one is; one thinks oneself to be somebody, you see, anyone at all, a boy, a girl, a man, a woman, a dog, a horse, anything at all, a stone, the sea, the sun; one believes oneself to be all this, instead of thinking oneself the One Divine — because, in fact, if one had continued thinking oneself the One Divine, there would have been no universe at all.

That was what I wanted to tell him (*indicating a child*), that this phenomenon of separation seems to be indispensable

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for a universe to be there, otherwise it would always have remained as it was. But if we re-establish the unity, after having made it pass through this curve, you see, if we re-establish the unity, having benefited from the multiplicity, the division, then we have a unity of a higher quality, a unity which knows itself instead of the unity which doesn't have to know itself, for there's nothing which may know the other. When the Oneness is absolute, who can know the Oneness? We must at least be able to have an image, an appearance of something which is not it in order to understand what it is. I believe that this is the secret of the universe. Perhaps the Divine wanted really to know Himself, so He threw Himself out and then looked at Himself, and now He wants to enjoy this possibility of being Himself with the full knowledge of Himself. This becomes much more interesting.

So there we are. Another question?

Sweet Mother, last time you spoke about the imagination, didn't you?

Yes.

Then, is it through the imagination that one can realise desires or aspirations?

That means? What exactly do you want to say? Imagining that the desire is realised and in this way help its realisation?

Yes.

Certainly, quite certainly.

And ideals also?

Only usually, yes, almost totally what people don't have at their disposal is the time it takes. But for instance, if you have a very

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powerful imagination and build up the realisation of your desire, build it up well with all its details and everything, like an admirably made formation existing in itself, totally, you see... well, you may be sure that if you live long enough the thing will be realised. It can be realised the next day, it can be realised the next minute, it can take years, it can take centuries. But it is sure to be realised. And then, if to this imaginative power you add a kind of creative vital strength, you make a very living force of it; and as all living forces tend towards realisation, it will put a pressure upon terrestrial events in order to be able to realise itself sooner, and it is realised.

Only, as I said, there are two things. First, as regards desires, personal circumstances, one is not very... persistent or very steady, and after some time what interested you very strongly doesn't interest you any longer. You think of something else, have another desire, and make another formation. But now the first thing one imagined is very well formed; after following its curve in space it is realised. But by then the person has started another construction because for some reason or other the thing doesn't interest him any more, and he is face to face with the realisation of his first desire, while having already embarked upon the second, the third or the fourth. So he is absolutely annoyed: "But why, I don't want this any longer, why does it come?" without his being conscious that quite simply it is the result of a previous deed. If, however, instead of being desires they are aspirations for spiritual things and one continues his line with a regular progress, then one is absolutely sure to obtain one day what he has imagined. The day may be slightly far-off if there are many obstacles on the path, for example if the formation that you have made is still very alien to the state of the earth atmosphere; well, it takes some time to prepare the conditions for its advent. But if it is something which has already been realised several times on earth and does not imply too categorical a transformation, you may have it quite quickly, provided that you follow the same line persistently. And if you

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add to this the ardour of a faith and trust in the divine Grace and that kind of self-giving to the Grace which makes you expect everything from It, then it can become tremendous; you can see things being realised more and more, and the most surprising ones can be realised one after another. But for this there are conditions to be fulfilled.

One must have a great purity and a great intensity in one's self-giving, and that absolute trust in the supreme wisdom of the divine Grace, that It knows better than we do what is good for us, and all that. Then if one offers one's aspiration to It, truly gives it with enough intensity, the results are marvellous. But one must know how to see them, for when things are realised most people find it absolutely natural, they don't even see why and how it has happened, and they tell themselves, "Yes, naturally it had to be like that." So they lose the joy of... the joy of gratitude, because, in the last analysis, if one can be filled with gratitude and thanksgiving for the divine Grace, it puts the finishing touch, and at each step one comes to see that things are exactly what they had to be and the best that could be.

There.

And so Sat-Chit-Ananda begins to come together, to form its unity once more.

There we are, my children. That's all?

Finished.

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Mother reads from *Lights on Yoga*, “Surrender and Opening”.

What does “to seek after the Impersonal” mean?

Oh! It’s very much in fashion in the West, my child. All those who are tired or disgusted with the God taught by the Chaldean religions, and especially by the Christian religion — a single God, jealous, severe, despotic and so much in the image of man that one wonders if it is not a demiurge as Anatole France said — these people when they want to lead a spiritual life no longer want the personal God, because they are too frightened lest the personal God resemble the one they have been taught about; they want an impersonal Godhead, something that doesn’t *at all* resemble — or as little as possible — the human being; that’s what they want.

But Sri Aurobindo says — something he has always said — that there are the godheads of the Overmind who indeed are very similar — we have said this several times — very similar to human beings, infinitely greater and more powerful but with resemblances which are a little too striking. Beyond these there is the impersonal Godhead, the impersonal Divine; but beyond the impersonal Divine there is the Divine who is the Person himself; and we must go through the Impersonal to reach the Supreme Divine who is beyond.

Only it is good, as I said, for those who have been put by education into contact with too individual, too personal a God, to seek the impersonal Divine, because this liberates them from many superstitions. After that if they are capable they will go farther and have once again a personal contact with a Divine who indeed is beyond all these other godheads.

So that’s it.

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Sweet Mother, how can we escape from other people's influence?

By concentrating more and more totally and completely on the Divine. If you aspire with all your ardour, if you want to receive only the divine influence, if all the time you pull back towards yourself what is taken, caught by other influences and with your will put it under the divine influence, you succeed in doing it. It's a work that can't be done in a day, in a minute; you must be vigilant for a very long time, for years; but one can succeed.

First of all you must will it.

For all things, first you must understand, will, and then begin to practise — begin by just a very little. When you catch yourself in the act of doing something because someone else wanted it or because you are not very sure of what you want to do and are in the habit of doing what this one or that one or tradition or customs make you do — because, among the influences under which you live, there are collective suggestions, social traditions, many!... Social habits are something terrible; your consciousness is stuffed with them from the time you are quite small; when a baby you are already told: "This should be done, that should not be done, you must do this in this way, you must not do it in that way", and all that; these are ideas which usually parents or teachers have received in the same way when they were very young and to which they are accustomed and submit by habit; these are the most dangerous influences because they are subtle, they are not expressed outwardly by words; your head was stuffed with them and your feelings and reactions, when you were very small, and it is only later, much later, when you begin to reflect and try to know what the truth is... as soon as you understand that there is something which must be put above all the rest, that there is something which can truly teach you to live, which must form your character, rule your movements... when you understand that, you can look at yourself doing, objectivise

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yourself, laugh a little at all those multiple small bondages of habit, traditions, the education you have received, and then put the light, consciousness, aspiration for surrender to the Divine on these things, and try to receive the divine inspiration to do things as it's necessary, not according to habits, not according to one's vital impulses, not according to all the vital impulses and personal wills which one receives from others and which push him to do things which perhaps he would not have done without all that.

One must observe all these things, look at them attentively and put them one after another in front of the divine Truth as one can receive it — it is progressive, one receives it purer and purer, stronger and stronger, more and more clear-sightedly — put all these things before it and with an absolute sincerity will that *this* may guide you and nothing else. You do this once, a hundred times, a thousand times, millions of times and after years of sustained effort you can gradually become aware that at last you are a free being — because this is what's remarkable: that when one is perfectly surrendered to the Divine one is perfectly free, and *this is* the absolute condition for freedom, to belong to the Divine alone; you are free from the whole world because you belong only to Him. And this surrender is the supreme liberation, you are also free from your little personal ego and of all things this is the most difficult — and the happiest too, the only thing that can give you a constant peace, an uninterrupted joy and the feeling of an *infinite* freedom from all that afflicts you, dwarfs, diminishes, impoverishes you, and from all that can create the least anxiety in you, the least fear. You are no longer afraid of anything, you no longer fear anything, you are the supreme master of your destiny because it is the Divine who wills in you and guides everything. But this does not happen overnight: a little time and a *great deal* of ardour in the will, not fearing to make any effort and not losing heart when one doesn't succeed, knowing that the victory is certain and that one must last out until it comes. There you are.

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Sweet Mother, what is meant by “the Divine gives Himself”?

It means exactly this: that the more you give yourself the more you have the experience — it is not just a feeling or impression or sensation, it is a total experience — that the more you give yourself to the Divine the more He is with you, totally, constantly, at every minute, in all your thoughts, all your needs, and that there’s no aspiration which does not receive an immediate answer; and you have the sense of a complete, constant intimacy, of a total nearness. It is as though you carried... as though the Divine were all the time with you; you walk and He walks with you, you sleep and He sleeps with you, you eat and He eats with you, you think and He thinks with you, you love and He is the love you have. But for this one must give himself entirely, totally, exclusively, reserve nothing, keep nothing for himself and not keep back anything, not disperse anything also: the least little thing in your being which is not given to the Divine is a waste; it is the wasting of your joy, something that lessens your happiness by that much, and all that you don’t give to the Divine is as though you were holding it in the way of the possibility of the Divine’s giving Himself to you. You don’t feel Him close to yourself, constantly with you, because you don’t belong to Him, because you belong to hundreds of other things and people; in your thought, your action, your feelings, impulses... there are millions of things which you do not give Him, and that is why you don’t feel Him always with you, because all these things are so many screens and walls between Him and you. But if you give Him everything, if you keep back nothing, He will be constantly and totally with you in all that you do, in all that you think, all that you feel, always, at each moment. But for this you must give yourself absolutely, keep back nothing; each little thing that you hold back is a stone you put down to build up a wall between the Divine and yourself. And then later you complain: “Oh, I don’t feel Him!” What would be surprising is that you could feel Him.

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That's all?

What exactly is meant by "the impersonal Divine"?

It's what is called in some philosophies and religions the Formless; something that's beyond all form, even the forms of thought, you see, not necessarily physical forms: forms of thought, forms of movement. It is the conception of something which is beyond not only what can be thought or conceived or seen even with the most subtle eyes, but all that has any kind of perceptible form whatever, even vibrations more subtle than those which infinitely overpass all human perceptions, even in the highest states of being, something which is beyond all manifestation of any order whatever — usually that's how we define the impersonal God. He has nothing, none of the qualities we can conceive of, He is beyond all qualification. It is obviously the quest of something which is the opposite of the creation, and that is why some religions have introduced the idea of what they call Nirvana, that is, of something which is nothing; it is the same quest, the same attempt to find something which would be the opposite of all that we can conceive. So finally we define It, because how can we speak of It? But in experience one tries to go beyond all that belongs to the manifested world, and that is what we call the impersonal Divine.

Well, it happens — and this is very interesting — that there is a region like that, a region which... how to put it?... which is the negation of all that exists. Behind all the planes of being, even behind the physical, there is a Nirvana. We use the word Nirvana because it is easier, but we can say, "There is an impersonal Divine behind the physical, behind the mind, behind the vital, behind all the regions of being; behind, beyond." (We are obliged to express ourselves in some sort of way.) It is not necessarily more subtle, it's something else, something absolutely different; that is, in a meditation, for example, if you meditate on Nirvana you can remain in a region of your mind and by a certain

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concentration produce a kind of reversal of your consciousness and find yourself suddenly in something which is Nirvana, non-existence; and yet in the ascent of your consciousness you have not gone beyond the mind.

One can have a little understanding of these things if one knows the multiplicity of dimensions, if one has understood this principle. First of all you are taught the fourth dimension. If you have understood that principle, of the dimensions, you can understand this. For example, as I said, you don't need to exteriorise yourself to go from one plane to another, when going to the most subtle planes to pass from the last most subtle plane to what we call Nirvana — to express it somehow. It is not necessary. You can, through a kind of interiorisation and by passing into another dimension or other dimensions... you can find in any domain whatever of your being this non-existence. And truly, one can understand a little bit of this without experiencing it. It is very difficult, but still, even without the experience one can understand just a little, if one understands this, this principle of the inner dimensions.

(Silence)

It can be put like this (you see, it's one way of saying it) that you carry within yourself both existence and non-existence at the same time, the personal and the impersonal, and... yes... the manifest and unmanifest... the finite and the infinite... time and eternity. And all that is in this tiny little body.

There are people who go beyond — even mentally, you see... their mental atmosphere goes beyond their body, even their vital atmosphere goes beyond their body — there are people whose consciousness is vast enough to extend over continents and even over other earths and other worlds, but this is a spatial concept. Yet by an interiorisation in other dimensions, the fourth and more, you can find all this in yourself, in one point... the infinite.

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Then Mother, isn't the infinite an extension of space?

Oh, no! That's the indefinite, not the infinite.

The infinite is the opposite of the finite. One can contain in himself the most finite finite and the most infinite infinite; in fact one does contain them, perhaps even in each one of the cells of the brain.

(Silence)

Mother, is there any difference in the experience when one attains the Impersonal by his own effort and when he attains it by surrendering to the Mother?

(Long silence)

Yes, there is a difference.

(Silence)

There would not be a difference, perhaps, if the goal to be reached was the impersonal Divine and if one wanted to be identified and united with the impersonal Divine and dissolve in that. I think that in this case there wouldn't be any difference. But if the aspiration is to realise what is beyond, we said, what Sri Aurobindo has called the supramental Reality, then here there's a difference, not only a difference in the path, for that's quite evident (it depends on different temperaments, besides), but if someone can truly know what surrender is and total trust, then it is *infinitely* easier, three-fourths of the worry and difficulties are over.

Now it is true that it can be said that one may find a very special difficulty in this surrender. This is true, that's why I said that it depends absolutely on the temperament. But it's not only that. If you like it may be compared to the difference between

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something linear which terminates in a point and a spherical path which terminates in a totality; a totality, that is, nothing would be excluded from the totality. Each one, individually, can reach the Origin and the utmost of his being; the origin and the utmost of his being are one with the Eternal, Infinite and Supreme. Therefore, if you reach this origin, you reach the Supreme. But you reach there by a line (don't take my words for an adequate description, you know, it's only to make myself understood). It is a linear realisation which ends in a point, and this point is united with the Supreme — your utmost possibility. By the other path it is a realisation which may be called spherical, because that gives best the idea of something containing all, and the realisation is no longer a point but a totality from which nothing is excluded.

I can't speak of the "whole" and the "part", because there's no division any longer. It's not like that, it's not that. But it is the quality of the approach, so to say, which is different. It is like saying that a perfect identification with one drop of water would make you know what the ocean is and what a perfect identification not only with the ocean but with all possible oceans. And yet with a perfect identification with one drop of water one could know the ocean in its essence, and in the other way one could know the ocean not only in its essence but in its totality. Something like that... I am trying to express it... It is very difficult but it's like that, there is something, there is a difference... It could be said that all that was individualised preserves at once the virtue of individuality and what might be called in a certain sense the limitations necessary to this individuality, when one relies only on his personal strength. In the other case one can benefit by the virtues of individuality without being under its limitations. This is almost philosophy, so it's no longer very clear. But (*laughing*) that's all I can say.

Nothing else? No?

I think that's enough!

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Mother reads from *Lights on Yoga*, "Surrender and Opening".

He has said everything, I have nothing to add.

Sweet Mother, here it is written: "The heart in this Yoga should in fact be the main centre of concentration until the consciousness rises above." But each one's consciousness is on a different plane!

Yes, very different. Only it is always said: "Concentrate here, on the solar plexus, the centre, here, because it's here that one can most easily find the psychic, enter into contact with the psychic. That's why. That's what it means.

Once the consciousness rises where does one find it?

Above the head, above the mind. What Sri Aurobindo means is: Unless one has gone beyond the mind and into altogether higher regions, so long as one remains in the human consciousness, the mental, vital, physical consciousness, one must concentrate in order to find the psychic. It is only if you have soared up out of the human consciousness and entered consciously the higher regions above the mind, far above the mind, that you no longer need to concentrate in the psychic because you will naturally find it.

But to rise above the mental consciousness, not into a higher speculative mind, but far beyond all mental movements is not an easy thing. To begin with, the mind must be absolutely silent and quiet, otherwise one can't do it. It is only when the mind enters into a complete silence, a perfect quietude, that it becomes just a mirror for reflecting what is above; then one can rise above. But so long as *that* goes on, there's no hope.

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Yet you must not mistake the feelings for the psychic, you understand! — these two are absolutely different things. People always think that when they have emotions, feelings, they are entering the psychic. These things have nothing to do with the psychic, they are purely vital. They are the most subtle part of the vital, if you like, but they are vital. It's not through the feelings that one goes to the psychic, it is through a very intense aspiration and a self-detachment.

Sweet Mother, what is the meaning of “to dry up the heart”?

To dry up the heart! People say that your heart is dried up when you no longer have any vital sentimentality. That's what they call having a dried up heart, when one no longer has any vital sentimentality. A really dried up heart is a being who... who would be incapable of any goodness, any generosity, any goodwill; but happily this is very rare.

There are some rare individuals, born without a psychic being who are wicked; but they are very rare. For everyone there is always hope; even those who imagine that they are very strong in being wicked, even for them, there is a hope; it can awaken suddenly. But that's not what people think. What people think is what I tell you; it's when you have no sentimental weakness and vital emotion that people tell you, “You have a dried up heart.” But that's their opinion, it's not a truth. A dried up heart would be someone incapable of having any compassion; it is very rare. Even in people who had the reputation of being the most wicked there was always a small corner of their being open to compassion. At times it was ridiculously small, but it was there.

Sweet Mother, when you say, “Concentrate in the heart”, does it mean concentrate with the mind?

The consciousness, not the mind, the consciousness!

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I don't say think in the heart, I say concentrate, concentrate the energy, concentrate the consciousness, concentrate the aspiration, concentrate the will. *Concentrate*. One can have an extremely intense concentration without a single thought, and in fact it is usually much more intense when one doesn't think. (*Silence*) It's one of the most indispensable things to do if one wants to succeed in having self-control and even a limited self-knowledge: to be able to localise one's consciousness and move it about in the different parts of one's being, in such a way as to distinguish between one's consciousness and one's thought, feelings, impulses, become aware of what the consciousness is in itself. And in this way one can learn how to shift it: one can put one's consciousness in the body, put it in the vital, put it in the psychic (that's the best place to put it in); one can put one's consciousness in the mind, can raise it above the mind, and with one's consciousness one can go into all the regions of the universe.

But first of all one must know what one's consciousness is, that is, become conscious of one's consciousness, localise it. And for this there are many exercises. But one of them is very well known, it is to observe oneself and watch oneself living, and then see whether it is really the body which is the consciousness of the being, what one calls "myself"; and then when one has realised that it is not at all the body, that the body expresses something else, then one searches in his impulses, emotions, to see whether it's that, and again one finds out that it is not that; and then one seeks in his thoughts, whether the thought is truly himself, what he calls "myself", and at the end of a very short time one becomes aware: "No, I am thinking, therefore 'myself' is different from my thoughts." And so, by progressive eliminations one succeeds in entering into contact with something, something which gives you the impression of being — "Yes, that's 'myself'". And this something I can move around, I can move it from my body to my vital, to my mind, I can even, if I am very... how to put it?... very practised in moving it, I can move it into other people, and it's in this way that I can identify myself with things and

people. I can with the help of my aspiration make it come out of my human form, rise above towards regions which are no longer this little body at all and what it contains.” And so one begins to understand what one’s consciousness is; and it’s after that that one can say, “Good, I shall unite my consciousness with my psychic being and shall leave it there, so that it may be in harmony with the Divine and be able to surrender entirely to the Divine.” Or else, “If by this exercise of rising above my faculties of thinking and my intellect I can enter a region of pure light, pure knowledge...” then one can put his consciousness there and live like that, in a luminous splendour which is above the physical form.

But first this consciousness must be mobile, and one must know how to distinguish it from the other parts of the being which in fact are its instruments, its modes of expression. The consciousness must make use of these things, and not you mistake these things for the consciousness. You put the consciousness in these things, so you become conscious of your body, conscious of your vital, conscious of your mind, conscious of all your activities through your will for identification; but for this, first your consciousness must not be completely entangled, mingled, joined, so to say, with all these things; it must not take them for itself, must not be deceived.

When one thinks of himself (obviously out of millions of men perhaps there are not ten who do otherwise) he thinks “Myself... that’s my body, that’s what I call ‘myself’, what’s like this. And so, I am like that; and then my neighbour, he also is the body. When I speak of another person, I speak of his body.” And so, as long as one is in this state he is the plaything of all possible movements and has no self-control.

The body is the last instrument and yet it’s this which one calls “myself” most of the time, unless one has begun to reflect.

Questions? No questions?

Why is one often dispersed during periods of assimilation?

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Yes, that's a very frequent state: dispersed in all one's thoughts, in all one's desires, all one's activities; that makes lots and lots of dispersion. And so one is pulled from all sides and has no coordination in his life.

But why during periods of assimilation?

Periods of assimilation? Dispersed?

Not necessarily! Not necessarily. There are people who, on the contrary, are extremely concentrated during periods of assimilation, shut up in themselves... Not necessarily! Usually one is more dispersed in periods of activity — not in periods of aspiration — I am speaking of ordinary activity.

One is always identified more or less with all that one does and all the things with which one is in contact. The ordinary state of people is to be in everything that they do, all that they see, all whom they frequently meet. They are like that. There is something in them which in fact is very vague and very inconsistent, and which moves around everywhere. And if they simply want to know a little what they are, they are obliged to pull back towards them a heap of things which are scattered everywhere. There is a kind of unconscious fluidity between people, I have told you this I don't know how many times; it produces a mixture, all that, as soon as it is no longer altogether material... It's because you have a skin that you don't enter into one another like that; otherwise even the subtle physical, you see... like a kind of almost perceptible vapour which goes out from bodies, which is the subtle physical, it intermingles terribly, and it produces all kinds of reactions, constantly, of one person upon another.

One may without knowing why, without having the least idea of the cause, pass precisely from a harmony of good health to a disequilibrium and a great uneasiness! One doesn't know why, there is no outer cause, suddenly it happens; one may have been peaceful, content, in at least a pleasant, tolerable condition,

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then all of a sudden to become furious, discontented, uneasy! One doesn't know why, there is no reason. One may have been full of joy, gaiety, enthusiasm, and then, without any apparent reason, one is sad, morose, depressed, discouraged! It happens sometimes that one is in a state of depression, and then one passes on somewhere and everything is lit up: a light, a joy — why, one becomes suddenly optimistic! This of course is rare — it can also happen, it is the same thing, it is also contagious; but still one risks much more catching destructive rather than constructive things.

There are very few people who carry with them an atmosphere which irradiates joy, peace, confidence; it is very rare. But these are truly benefactors of humanity. They don't need to open their mouth.

(Silence)

That's all?

Sweet Mother, every day we go for the Balcony Darshan, and here at the Playground we come for the March Past and the Concentration.¹ What should be our approach to each one of these things?

The most indispensable thing in every case is receptivity.

At the Balcony, for example. When I come on the Balcony I make a special concentration, you notice that I look at everybody, don't you; I look, see, pass my eyes over every one, I know all who are there, and where they are, and I give each one exactly what he needs; I see his condition and give him what is necessary. It can go fast, because otherwise I would keep you

¹ In this period Mother used to give Darshan every morning from her balcony. This was known as "Balcony Darshan". In the evening She was present in the Playground to receive the salute at the March Past and conduct the Concentration at the end of the "Marching".

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there for half an hour, but I do it, that's what I do. That's the only reason why I come out, because otherwise I carry you in my consciousness. I carry you in my consciousness always, without seeing you, I do what is necessary. But here it is a moment when I can do it by touching the physical directly, you see; otherwise it is through the mind that it acts, the mind or the vital. But here I touch the physical directly through the sight, the contact of sight; and that's what I do — each time.

So if each one who comes, comes with a kind of trust, of inner opening, and is ready to receive what is given, and naturally is not dispersed... there are people there who pass their time looking at what is happening, what the others are doing; and in this way they don't have much chance to receive anything very much... but if one comes concentrated on what he can receive and is as quiet as possible, and as though he were open to receive something, as though he were opening his consciousness, like this (*gesture*) to receive something — if one has a particular difficulty or problem, one can put it in an aspiration, but it is not very necessary, because usually between what people think about themselves and the condition in which they are, there is always a little difference, in the sense that it's not quite the thing; their way of feeling or seeing the thing creates a little deformation, so I am obliged to cross over their deformation; whereas if they don't think about anything, if they are simply like this (*gesture*), open and awaiting the Force — I go straight in and what has to be done I do. And that's the moment when I know exactly, you see, I do this (*gesture*), quite slowly — from above I see *very well, very well* — exactly the condition in which each one is. That's the morning's work.

The "Concentration" is something absolutely different. I try, first, to make the atmosphere as calm, quiet, unified as possible, as though I were spreading the consciousness out wide, like this (*gesture*); and then from far above I bring down the Force as much as I can and put it upon you as strongly as I can. So this depends exclusively on whether one is quite tranquil and

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well concentrated; here one must be concentrated, one must not be dispersed, one must be concentrated, but very... how to put it?... plain, very horizontal. Like this (*gesture*). Then the Force puts a pressure. And it's above all for unifying, penetrating the whole and endeavouring to make of it something cohesive which can express collectively the Force from above.

In the morning it is an individual work, in the evening it is a collective work. But naturally, within that, each one can feel individually, but you see, it is a work of unification which I do in the evening. Each one receives according to his receptivity and the state in which he is.

And during the March Past, Sweet Mother?

That, the March Past, it is... it is more a physical action — preparing oneself for the physical action. It is more a way of opening oneself to the energy, the universal energy, to prepare for the action. It is a contact with the energy, the universal energy which is there, it is to help the body to participate in the work. At that moment it is something very physical. This is truly the basis of physical culture: to prepare the body for the action and the receptivity of energies to accomplish the work. And also the Marching, even when I am not there. But the March Past is for stimulating the receptivity of the body to the energies for realisation. It is based upon something which is expressed in all kinds of ways; but it is a kind of admiration... how to put it?... a spontaneous and also charming admiration for heroism, which is in the most material physical consciousness.

And this is a tremendous power for overcoming *tamas* and physical inertia. Besides it is upon this that all the fighting capacities of armies in the wars are founded. If human beings did not have this, well, one could never make them go to fight one another, stupidly, for things which they don't even know. And it is because this is there in the being that these great masses of men can be utilised, employed and put in motion.

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There were examples of this, absolutely marvellous ones, in the First World War, which was much harder for the individual than the Second. It was a terrible war because men had dug trenches and were obliged to lie sunk in the earth like worms, under the perpetual danger of a bombardment against which they could do nothing but protect themselves as well as possible; and they remained at times shut in there for days. Sometimes it happened that they were shut in for more than fifteen days in one trench, for there was no means of changing them; that is, it was a mole's life under a perpetual danger, and with nothing to do about it. Of all things it was the most horrible. It was a horrible war. Well, there were troops which had been left like that, for nothing more could be done because of the bombardments and all that, they could not be relieved any more. It was called "relieving", relieving the troops, bringing new troops and taking away the others to give them rest. There were some who remained in this way for days. There were some who remained ten days, twelve days. There was cause enough to go mad, for anyone at all. Well, among these people there were some who related their life, related what happened.

I have read books about this, not novels, reports noted from day to day of what was happening. There is one — by the way it is a great writer who wrote his memories of the War, and he related that they had held on like that under the bombardment for ten days. (Naturally there were many who were finished off there.) And then they were made to come back behind and were replaced by others, new ones arrived, the old ones returned. And naturally when they returned — you see, they had eaten poorly, had slept badly, had lived in dark holes, indeed it was a dreadful life — when they had come back, some of them could not even take off their shoes any more because the feet were so swollen inside that they couldn't pull them off. These are unthinkable physical horrors. Well, these people (you see, at that time mechanical transports were not as common as in this last war), so they came back on foot, like that, broken, half-dead.

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They had stuck.

That was one of the most beautiful things in the war from the point of view of courage: because they had held on, the enemy could not take the trenches and was not able to advance. Naturally the news spread and then they came to a village and all the people of the village came out to receive them and lined the road with flowers and shouts of enthusiasm. All those men who could no longer even drag themselves along, you see, who were like this (*gesture of collapse*), suddenly all of them were seen drawing themselves up erect, holding up their heads, filled with energy, and all together they began to sing and went through the whole village singing. It seemed like a resurrection.

Well, it is about this kind of thing I am speaking. It is something so beautiful, which is in the most material physical consciousness! You see, all of a sudden, they had the feeling that they were heroes, that they had done something heroic, and so they didn't want to look like people completely flattened out, no longer good for anything. "We are ready to go back to the fight if necessary!" Like that. And they went by in this way. It seems it was marvellous; I am sure of it, that it was marvellous.²

Well, that's what you are developing with the March Past now.

There we are.

² In continuation of this talk, while leaving the Playground Mother remarked to Pavitra: "It is the cellular response to the enthusiasm of the vital."

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Mother reads from *Lights on Yoga*, “Surrender and Opening”.

What is “the true life-activity”?

It is to express the Divine. That is the very reason of existence and life, its truth and its sole true activity.

Sweet Mother, here Sri Aurobindo has said “It is impossible.” Why? For you have said that nothing is impossible!

Nothing is impossible in principle. But if one refuses to do what is necessary, obviously one cannot succeed.

In the material world there are conditions, otherwise it would not be what it is. If there were no conditions and processes, everything could be transformed and done miraculously. But evidently it is not in this way that it was decided, because things don't happen miraculously — in any case, not miracles as the human mind conceives of them, that is, constant arbitrary decisions. It is obvious that in the world there are no arbitrary decisions.

Sri Aurobindo says: In order to do such and such a thing, these are the conditions. If you refuse to fulfil these conditions you won't do that particular thing, you will do something else; that, evidently, is not the only thing possible. But if that's the thing one wants to do, one must fulfil the conditions... One can do something else!

I believe that if you take the world in its totality, in Time and Space, it is obvious that you can say, “Nothing is impossible”, and that probably everything will be; but that's in the totality, and in Time and Space, that is, through eternities of time and infinities of space all is possible. But at a given moment, at a

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given point, there is a certain number of “possibles”, and all are not there, and certain conditions have to be fulfilled for these possibilities to be realised. The world is constructed like that. We can do nothing about it. I mean it is useless to say, “It ought to be otherwise.” It is like that, we must take it as it is, endeavour to make the best possible out of it.

Sweet Mother, here Sri Aurobindo has said: “If the inmost soul is awakened, if there is a new birth out of the mere mental, vital and physical into the psychic consciousness, then this Yoga can be done...” Why has he said “the inmost soul”? Is there a superficial soul?

It is because this inmost soul, that is, the central psychic being, influences the superficial parts of the consciousness (superficial in comparison with it: mental parts, vital parts). The purest mind, the highest vital, the emotive being — the soul influences them, influences them to an extent where one has the impression of entering into contact with it through these parts of the being. So people take these parts for the soul and that is why he says “the inmost soul”, that is, the central soul, the real soul.

For very often, when one touches certain parts of the mind which are under the psychic influence and full of light and the joy of that light, or when one touches certain very pure and very high parts of the emotive being which has the most generous, most unselfish emotions, one also has the impression of being in contact with one’s soul. But this is not the true soul, it is not the soul in its very essence. These are parts of the being under its influence and manifesting something of it. So, very often people enter into contact with these parts and this gives them illuminations, great joy, revelations, and they feel they have found their soul. But it is only the part of the being under its influence, one part or another, for... Exactly what happens is that one touches these things, has experiences, and then it gets veiled, and one wonders, “How is it that I touched my soul and now

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have fallen back into this state of ignorance and inconstance!” But that’s because one had not touched one’s soul, one had touched those parts of the being which are under the influence of the soul and manifest something of it, but are not it.

I have already said many times that when one enters consciously into contact with one’s soul and the union is established, it is over, it can no longer be undone, it is something permanent, constant, which resists everything, and which, at any moment whatever, if referred to can be found; whereas the other things — one can have very fine experiences, and then it gets veiled again, and one tells oneself, “How does that happen? I saw my soul and now I don’t find it any more!” It was not the soul one had seen. And these things are very beautiful and give you very impressive experiences, but this is not the contact with the psychic being itself.

The contact with the psychic being is definitive, and it is about this that I say, when people ask, “Do I have a contact with my psychic being?”, “Your question itself proves that you don’t have it!”

That’s all, my children?

Sweet Mother, I have heard that the magicians who use occult powers for their work suffer a great deal after their death. Is it true?

What sort of magicians are you speaking about? Any kind?

Those who have occult powers and use them for their personal interest? You mean these?

Yes.

I don’t know whether they suffer after their death or lose their consciousness, but in any case, obviously they are not in any state of peace or happiness, that’s absolutely certain. For it is a kind of absolute rule from the spiritual point of view: it is by

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an inner discipline and by consecration to the Divine that the powers come to you. But if with your aspiration, your discipline and consecration, an ambition is mixed up, that is, an intention to obtain powers, then if they come to you it is almost like a curse. Usually they don't come to you, but something vital which tries to imitate them comes to you with adverse influences which put you entirely under the domination of beings who give you powers simply with the intention of making use of you, using you to do all the work they have the intention of doing, and to create all the disorder they want to create. And when they find that you have served them enough and are no longer good for anything, they just destroy you. They may not be able to destroy you physically because they don't always have the power to do it, but they destroy you mentally, vitally and in your consciousness, and after that you are good for nothing, even before dying. And after death, as you are entirely under their influence, the first thing they do is to swallow you up, because this is their way of making use of people — to swallow them. So it cannot be a very pleasant experience. It is a very, very, very dangerous game.

But everywhere, in all the teachings, in all the disciplines, in all ages, the same thing has been repeated: that one must never intermingle ambition and personal interest with the sadhana, otherwise he is inviting trouble. So it is not only a particular case, it is all the instances of this kind which have fatal consequences.

Sweet Mother, are there any magicians who do not work magic for their personal interest?

You mean magical rites? Because, you see, you must not mix up magic with occultism.

Occultism is a science and it is the knowledge of invisible forces and the capacity to handle them, as one has the capacity of handling material forces if one has studied them scientifically.

Magic: these are different kinds of processes which were fixed probably by people who had a certain knowledge, and

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still more a certain power of vital formation. These things can be learnt without having any special capacity, that is, someone who has no inner power can learn this as he learns chemistry, for example, or mathematics. It is one of the things which are learnt like that, it is not a thing one acquires. So it doesn't itself carry any special virtues except the same kind of qualities as those one learns through chemical manipulations. You may reproduce these manipulations, but if you are an intelligent and capable being, you can by the help of these manipulations obtain an interesting and useful result, and in any case, be sheltered from all danger; whereas if you are an idiot, misfortunes may come to you. It is something similar.

With the help of magical formulas one may produce a certain result, but this result is necessarily limited and has no particular interest for those who, through their inner development, spontaneously receive powers of which they have a higher knowledge, not a mechanical one. It is not for someone who is truly a yogi; it has no interest except that of curiosity. It is interesting only for people who are precisely not yogis and who want to have certain powers which, in fact, they have in a very limited way — it is always limited.

What is special about it is that it has a direct action upon matter; while usually, apart from some rare exceptions, with people who have spiritual powers, yogic powers, it acts through the intermediary of the mental forces usually — either spiritual or mental forces — sometimes of the vital forces (more rarely), but not directly upon matter, except naturally with those who have done yoga in matter, but these are exceptional cases of which one doesn't speak. These things put into motion certain small entities which are usually the result of the decomposition of human beings and yet have a sufficient contact with the material world to be able to act there. But anyhow, if the action is of a lower order, the power is of a lower order, and it is something almost repugnant for one who is truly in relation with the higher forces.

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To act in order to accomplish a work with the spontaneous powers of spiritual realisation, that is well understood. But one may say that everybody does that, because just the fact of thinking means that you are acting invisibly; and according to the power of your thought your action is more or less widespread. But to use small magical formulas to obtain a result is something that has no true relation with the spiritual life. From the spiritual point of view it appears even surprising that these things can always prove effective, because for each case the need is different; and how putting together certain words and making certain signs can always have an effect seems surprising.

When one wants to act spiritually and for some reason or other it is necessary, for example, to formulate words, the words come spontaneously and are exactly the words needed for the particular occasion. But things written beforehand which one repeats mechanically most of the time, without even knowing what one is saying and why one is saying it—it is difficult to see how this can always work. There is bound to be a great imprecision in the action. And one thing is certain, that this same formula cannot have exactly the same effect, and that one factor is indispensable for it to take effect: fear. The first thing is a kind of fear, a fright created in the person against whom the magic is done; for if he has no fear I am quite sure that it cannot have any effect or has so ridiculously small an effect that it's not worth speaking about it.

What opens the door to the action of these forces is fear, a kind of apprehension, the feeling that something is going to happen; and it is these vibrations of fear which put out certain forces from you, forces which give these entities the power to act.

Sweet Mother, there are people who do hypnotism. Then, when they always practise it on the same person, does that person fall ill after a while?

Not necessarily ill. It depends on the kind of hypnotism and

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hypnotiser. Not necessarily ill. One thing is certain, that this person loses his personal will, that the hypnotiser's will takes the place of the personal will, otherwise it would not work. But not necessarily ill, terribly dependent! It creates almost a kind of slavery.

(Long silence)

It is very difficult to say, because it depends entirely on the hypnotiser and the hypnotised, and how it is done. In its ordinary outer form it is something that can cause much disturbance.

But there can be a spontaneous hypnotism which may be the expression of a divine force, but then that does not work in the ordinary way.

I think there are as many cases as people. It's like every other thing. If you put scientific knowledge in the hands of ignorant and stupid people, it can produce catastrophes. And if to this is added the fact that they are people with ill-will or those who have personal motives, then the results are as bad as can be. It's the same with hypnotism. It depends exclusively upon the one practising it and how he practises it.

It's not something genuine; like all so-called human knowledge, it is not true, but the deformation of something.

It could be said that if the divine Will works in you, you can call it hypnotism, if you like, and yet it is the supreme Good, you see.

But what is usually called hypnotism is a completely blind and ignorant action: the use of the power of a force which one doesn't even know very well. So naturally it has unfortunate results; and then, as I say, if it falls into the hands of someone who is unscrupulous or has bad intentions, it becomes altogether disastrous.

10 August 1955

Mother reads from *Lights on Yoga*, "Surrender and Opening".

Here we are. Nothing to ask? Nobody has anything to say?

(*Silence*)

We can meditate for five minutes. Let us try collective meditation, shall we? It's going to be a little difficult. We can try.

You would like to try on what we have read?

Do not think, just concentrate like this: let what we have read enter into you, and try to experience it; try.

Don't try to think, to turn over ideas, have answers to questions, nothing of all that. Just remain like this (*gesture*), open.

It was about opening, right through. You should let what was read enter into you, and then, in this way, do its work inside you. You must remain as silent and quiet as possible.

We shall see what is going to happen.

(*Meditation for more than five minutes*)

Something to say? No? Good!

But it was not bad for a beginning. It is quite good.

Is that all? We don't go farther? Nobody has anything to say?

Then it's better to stop.

17 August 1955

Mother reads from *Lights on Yoga*, “Surrender and Opening”.

Sweet Mother, what is the meaning of “a horizontal opening into the cosmic consciousness”?

You see, one always has the feeling either of a vertical ascent to the heights of the Supreme Consciousness or a kind of... how to put it?... horizontal widening into a universal consciousness.

A universal consciousness means becoming aware of the forces which manifest in the universe and in all that is manifested. For example, just this: there are many people here; well, let us take these people as representing the universe. Now, if you want to unite with them, you have a movement of consciousness spreading above them all and uniting with all, like this (*gesture*). It is a movement which spreads horizontally.

But if you want to unite with the supramental Force which wants to come down, you have the feeling of gathering all your aspiration and making it rise up in a vertical ascent to the higher forces which have to descend. It is just a question of movement, you see, it is a movement of widening or a movement of concentration and ascent.

What does the liberation of the psychic being mean?

Because one has the feeling — this is a feeling one very often has in the beginning of the sadhana — that the psychic being is as though shut up in a kind of hard shell, a prison, and that this is what prevents it from manifesting outwardly and entering into a conscious and constant relation with the outer consciousness, the outer being. One has altogether the feeling that it is as though enclosed in a box or in a prison with walls

which must be broken or a door which must be forced in order to be able to enter. So naturally if one can break the walls, open the door, it liberates the psychic being which was shut in and which can now manifest externally. All these are images. But each person, naturally, has his own personal image, his personal method, with small modifications.

Some of these images are very common to all those who have had the experience. For example, when one goes down into the depths of one's being to find the psychic right at the bottom of one's consciousness, there is this image of descending into a deep well, going down deeper and deeper, descending, and it is as though one were truly sinking into a well.

Naturally all these are analogies; but they are associations with the experience of impressions which give a great deal of force and concrete reality to the experience.

As when one goes on the discovery of one's inner being, of all the different parts of one's being, one very often has the feeling that one is entering deep into a hall or room, and according to the colour, the atmosphere, the things it contains, one has a very clear perception of the part of the being one is visiting. And then, one can go from one room to another, open doors and go into deeper and deeper rooms each of which has its own character. And often, these inner visits can be made during the night. Then it takes a still more concrete form, like a dream, and one feels that he is entering a house, and that this house is very familiar to him. And according to the time, the periods, it is internally different, and sometimes it may be in a state of very great disorder, very great confusion, where everything is mixed up; sometimes there are even broken things; it is quite a chaos. At other times these things are organised, put in their place; it is as though one had arranged the household, one cleans up, puts it in order, and it is always the same house. This house is the image, a kind of objective image, of your inner being. And in accordance with what you see there or do there, you have a symbolic representation of your psychological work. It is very

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useful for concretising. It depends on people.

Some people are just intellectuals; for them everything is expressed by ideas and not by images. But if they were to go down into a more material domain, well, they risk not touching things in their concrete reality and remaining only in the domain of ideas, remaining in the mind and remaining there indefinitely. Then one thinks one is making progress, and mentally one has done so, though it is something altogether indefinite.

The mind's progress may take thousands of years, for it is a very vast and very indefinite field, which is constantly renewed. But if one wants to progress in the vital and physical, well, this imaged representation becomes very useful for fixing the action, making it more concrete. Naturally it doesn't happen completely at will; it depends on each one's nature. But those who have the power of concentrating with images, well, they have one more facility.

To sit in meditation before a closed door, as though it were a heavy door of bronze — and one sits in front of it with the will that it may open — and to pass to the other side; and so the whole concentration, the whole aspiration is gathered into a beam and pushes, pushes, pushes against this door, and pushes more and more with an increasing energy until all of a sudden it bursts open and one enters. It makes a very powerful impression. And so one is as though plunged into the light and then one has the full enjoyment of a sudden and radical change of consciousness, with an illumination that captures one entirely, and the feeling that one is becoming another person. And this is a very concrete and very powerful way of entering into contact with one's psychic being.

Sweet Mother, here Sri Aurobindo says: "The nexus between the psychic being and the higher consciousness is the principal means of the siddhi." Ordinarily is there not a nexus between the psychic being and the higher consciousness?

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Ordinarily means in the ordinary life? A relation between the psychic being...

Yes.

It is almost, almost totally unconscious.

In the ordinary life there's not one person in a million who has a conscious contact with his psychic being, even momentarily. The psychic being may work from within, but so invisibly and unconsciously for the outer being that it is as though it did not exist. And in most cases, the immense majority, almost the totality of cases, it's as though it were asleep, not at all active, in a kind of torpor.

It is only with the sadhana and a very persistent effort that one succeeds in having a conscious contact with his psychic being. Naturally, it is possible that there are exceptional cases — but this is truly exceptional, and they are so few that they could be counted — where the psychic being is an entirely formed, liberated being, master of itself, which has chosen to return to earth in a human body in order to do its work. And in this case, even if the person doesn't do the sadhana consciously, it is possible that the psychic being is powerful enough to establish a more or less conscious relation. But these cases are, so to say, unique and are exceptions which confirm the rule.

In almost, almost all cases, a very, very sustained effort is needed to become aware of one's psychic being. Usually it is considered that if one can do it in thirty years one is very lucky — thirty years of sustained effort, I say. It may happen that it's quicker. But this is so rare that immediately one says, "This is not an ordinary human being." That's the case of people who have been considered more or less divine beings and who were great yogis, great initiates.

(Silence)

Questions and Answers

Do you want a concentration, a meditation?

I suggest that the lights may be turned off... this light here above my head, because there are so many insects.

(Meditation)

24 August 1955

Mother reads from *Lights on Yoga*, “Surrender and Opening”.

So?

Sweet Mother, when we concentrate on one of your photos — there are many photos, each one with a different expression — does it make a difference for us, the one on which we concentrate?

If you do it purposely, yes, of course. If you choose this photo for a particular reason or that other one for another reason, surely. It has an effect. It is as though you were choosing to concentrate on one aspect of the Mother rather than another; for example, if you choose to concentrate on Mahakali or Mahalakshmi or on Maheshwari, the results will be different. That part of you which answers to these qualities will awaken and become receptive. So, it is the same thing. But somebody who has only one photo, whichever it may be, and concentrates, without choosing this one or that, because he has only one, then it is of no importance which one it is. For the fact of concentrating on the photograph puts one in contact with the Force, and that is what is necessary in the case of everyone who responds automatically.

It is only when the person who concentrates puts a special will, with a special relation, into his concentration that it has an effect. Otherwise the relation is more general, and it is always the expression of the need or the aspiration of the person who concentrates. If he is absolutely neutral, if he does not choose, does not aspire for any particular thing, if he comes like this, like a white page and absolutely neutral, then it is the forces and aspects he needs which will answer to the concentration and perhaps even the person himself will not know what particular

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things he needs, because very few people are conscious of themselves. They live in a vague feeling, they have a vague aspiration and it is almost unseizable; it is not something organised, coordinated and willed, with a clear vision, for example, of the difficulties one wants to overcome or the capacities one wants to acquire; this, usually, is already the result of a fairly advanced discipline. One must have reflected much, observed much, studied much in order to be able to know exactly what he needs. Otherwise it is something hazy, this impression: one tries to catch it and it escapes... Isn't that so?

Is that all?

It is outside the text.

(Another child) *Mother, here it is said: "One can relax and meditate instead of concentrating."*

It's not I who have said it! (*Laughter*) Good. So? The difference between meditating and concentrating?

Yes, Mother, because when one meditates, isn't there a concentration of the consciousness?

Meditation!

There are all kinds of different meditations! What people usually call meditation is, for example, choosing a subject or an idea and following its development or trying to understand what it means. There is a concentration but not as complete a concentration as in concentration proper, where nothing should exist except the point on which one concentrates. Meditation is a more relaxed movement, less tense than concentration.

When one is trying to understand a problem which comes up, a psychological problem or a circumstantial one, and he sits down and looks at and sees all the possibilities, compares them, studies them, this is a form of meditation; and one does

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it spontaneously when the thing comes up. When one is facing a decision to be taken, for instance, and doesn't know which one to take, well, ordinarily one reflects, consults his reason, compares all the possibilities and makes his choice... more or less. Well, this is a form of meditation.

Now, there is the form of meditation which consists in a concentration on an idea and concentrating one's attention upon it to the extent that that alone exists; then this is the equivalent of a concentration, but instead of being total it is only mental.

Total concentration implies a concentration also of all the movements of the vital and physical. The method of gazing at a point is a very well-known one. So it is even physical, you see, one's eyes are fixed on this point, and one does not move any more... nothing more... one sees nothing, doesn't move his sight from that point, and the result usually is that one ends up by becoming that point. And I knew someone who used to say that one had to pass beyond the point, become this point, to the extent of passing to the other side, crossing the point, and that then one opened to higher regions. But it is true that if one succeeds in concentrating totally on a point, there is a moment when the identification is absolute, and there is no more any separation between the one who is concentrating and the thing upon which he is concentrated. There is a complete identification. One can't distinguish between himself and the point. This is a total concentration, while meditation is a particular concentration of the thought, a partial one.

The opening, Sweet Mother, for not thinking at all!

Not thinking at all is not easy; but if one wants a perfect concentration it is essential that there are no thoughts any more.

Is there a relation, Sweet Mother, between concentration and contemplation?

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There can always be a relation between everything, but usually one means by contemplation a kind of opening upwards. It is rather a state of passive opening upwards. It is a fairly passive form of aspiration. One makes this movement rather like something opening, opening in an aspiration; but if the contemplation is sufficiently total, it becomes a concentration. Yet it is not necessarily a concentration.

When it is a concentration, then the part which concentrates... concentration is limited or rather...

A concentration is essentially a limiting. One can't concentrate on several points at once, it is no longer a concentration.

No, I mean during a contemplation.

No, you just said that it is a limited concentration; a concentration is necessarily limited.

Sweet Mother, in the Bulletin you have written: "Poetry is the sensuousness of the spirit." What does that mean?

What does it mean?... It's because poetry is related to the forms and images of ideas: forms, images, sensations, impressions, emotions of ideas, all this is the sensuous side of things. All the relation with forms and sensations, images, impressions, all that is the sensuousness of things. And poetry is this side of thought; it is this way of approaching the world, approaching the world of thought, by the images of these thoughts, the forms, appearances, emotions and sensations and the play of these things, the play of appearances, of ideas. It is not at all like philosophy or metaphysics, which seek the heart of the idea, the principle of the idea. Poetry is not poetic unless it evokes. It is the world of form and sensation. So we just take an expression that's a little... how to put it?... epigrammatic, and we may say, "It is the

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sensuousness of the spirit” — just as those who are exclusively busy with the sensations of all that the material world expresses through its forms, and the whole side of the forms of sensations of the physical life, are men who live in their senses; and when they enjoy all these things, well, we call them sensuous.

Here, instead of being applied to the outer physical life, it is applied to the life of the spirit, to ideas and what is beyond ideas. And all that world, seen under the aspect of the beauty of its form — this is poetry. It expresses the beauty of ideas, the harmony of thoughts, and gives to it all a form which becomes concrete, images, the play of images, the play of sounds, the play of words.

So, instead of being the sensuousness of matter it is the sensuousness of the spirit. It is not taken in a pejorative sense nor a moral one — not at all, it is simply descriptive.

But while concentrating on the form and the beauty of ideas, doesn't one risk missing the truth?

But that's what I said. It is not pejorative, I did not say that it prevents you from seeing the truth of things. It is the way, the manner of approaching the subject. Certainly, if I had to choose between reading a beautiful poem and a book of metaphysics, I would prefer to read the poem; it would be less tiring. It is not pejorative, it is descriptive. It's just to say: "It is like that." It is a statement, nothing more.

What is surprising is that people have never thought about it. If they moved in the spirit with the freedom of full consciousness, this would not surprise them at all, because they would know it very well, that it is like that, that it is a sensuous way of approaching the truth. Only, you see, in this domain they are not yet absolutely independent, so usually they think in a classical or traditional or habitual manner, or in accordance with what they have learnt or read, but without the freedom of independence.

Questions and Answers

It is simply a slightly paradoxical way of saying things, in order to strike, strike the thought — that's all. But you must not think that it is a condemnation of poetry. It's very far from that.

Sweet Mother, when can we say that a poet is inspired?

Why shouldn't he be?

Then he doesn't think when he is writing a poem?

Doesn't think? That means...?

It comes from above!

It's not that. You mean: when do we say that a poet is inspired? Usually we say that a poet is inspired when he receives inspirations. (*Laughter*)

What you mean but don't say... it's those who go beyond thought, silence their thoughts, those who have an absolutely silent and immobile mind, who open to inner regions and write almost automatically what comes to them from above. That's what you meant but didn't say. But that's quite a different thing, and it happens once in a thousand years. It's not a frequent phenomenon. First of all one must be a yogi to be able to do all that. But an inspired poet, as we call him... that's something absolutely different. All men of some genius, that is, those who have an opening upon a world slightly higher than the ordinary mind, are called "inspired". One who makes some discoveries is also inspired. Each time one is in contact with something a little higher than the ordinary human field, one is inspired. So when one is not altogether limited by the ordinary consciousness one receives inspirations from above; the source of his production is higher than the ordinary mental consciousness.

That's all? No more questions?

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Mother, sometimes one feels a silence, but feels himself outside this silence. Why is it like that?

One feels a silence, and then?

In things.

No. If you, in your consciousness, reach a state of silence, you perceive your state of silence everywhere, but others don't necessarily perceive it. You perceive it because you are in that state. It is the same as with those who become aware of the Divine in themselves: they see the Divine everywhere, but others are not necessarily conscious of that. It's because you have entered into that state; as you are conscious of this state, you are conscious of it wherever it is; and in fact it is everywhere, somewhere, not superficially and outwardly, but inwardly.

One feels that one is outside the silence, that it is not in me.

That one is outside the silence? Then one is in the noise! I don't quite understand what...

I mean that the silence is in things, but not in myself.

Probably because you are more in things than in yourself at that time. It means that you have become aware of the silence more outside yourself than within yourself.

Sweet Mother, sometimes it happens that one was not ready for a meditation or concentration and then suddenly one is forced into something and obliged to be silent; even if one wanted to get out then, one can't; one remains like that, sometimes for a long time, absolutely

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carried away by the torrent of things. Does this enter the category of meditation?

This simply means that one suddenly comes under the influence of a higher force of which one is not conscious; one is conscious only of the effect, but not of the cause. That's all. It's nothing more than that. If you were conscious you would know what makes you silent, what makes you meditate, what kind of force has entered into you or acts upon you or influences you and puts you in the silence. But as you are not conscious, you are aware only of the effect, the result, that is, the silence that comes into you.

But one can become conscious, Sweet Mother, can't one?

Fully! But for this one must work a little within oneself. One must withdraw from the surface.

Almost totally, everybody lives on the surface, all the time, all the time on the surface. And for them it's even the only thing which exists — the surface. And when something compels them to draw back from the surface, some people feel that they are falling into a hole. There are people who, if they are drawn back from the surface, suddenly feel that they are crumbling down into an abyss, so unconscious they are!

They are conscious only of a kind of small thin crust which is all that they know of themselves and things and the world, and it is so thin a crust! Many! I have experienced, I don't know how often... I tried to interiorise some people and immediately they felt that they were falling into an abyss, and at times a black abyss. Now this is the absolute inconscience. But a fall, a fall into something which for them is like a non-existence, this happens very often. People are told: "Sit down and try to be silent, to be very quiet"; this frightens them terribly.

A fairly long preparation is needed in order to feel an increase of life when one goes out of the outer consciousness. It

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is already a great progress. And then there is the culmination, that when one is obliged for some reason or other to return to the outer consciousness, it is there that one has the impression of falling into a black hole, at least into a kind of dull, lifeless greyness, a chaotic mixture of disorganised things, with the faintest light, and all this seems so dull, so dim, so dead that one wonders how it is possible to remain in this state — but this of course is the other end — unreal, false, confused, lifeless!

(Silence)

So, shall we try to enter within, to see if there is a black hole or not?

Only... I would very much like nobody to move, get up or go away.

Those who are not sure of being able to remain still — I request them to go away *immediately!* For, if they get up during the meditation, they disturb everything.

Here's someone already moving over there. He has heard nothing and he is moving.

There are some who don't understand French.

Don't speak French? If they don't speak French why are they here? I don't speak in any other language except French here!

(Meditation)

31 August 1955

Mother reads from *Lights on Yoga*, “Work”.

Sweet Mother, here I did not understand “One must have the same consciousness in inner experience and outward action and make both full of the Mother.”

I haven’t understood either.¹ Isn’t there a clause of the sentence missing? I too haven’t understood the structure of this sentence. (*Mother turns to Pavitra*) It seems to me that there’s at least a word missing.

(Pavitra) *I shall verify it with the English on our return.*

No. It may be like this in English. I can imagine the English sentence, but in French it is not clear. (*Mother takes up the book*) Yes, it is right at the beginning. (*Mother reads the sentence*) Oh! Yes, yes... it is not clear.²

(Pavitra) *That’s it; the word “remplir” is too concrete in French.*

So, now do you understand?... Is that all?

Sweet Mother, when someone wants to do some work, is it better that you choose the work for him or that he chooses it himself?

This depends on the point of view one takes.

¹ Mother was referring, of course, to the French translation of Sri Aurobindo’s original.

² The rest of this paragraph is a discussion of the French translation. It cannot be translated.

If it is from the point of view of yoga and of the person who wants to do the work, it is preferable to let him choose, because he can be, for example, under the illusion that he is capable of doing something and he is not; or he has an ambition, he wants to do something to satisfy his self-love, his vanity. And so, if he is allowed to do so, as the work that's done here is under the influence of the Truth-Consciousness, his incapacity for the work will appear immediately, and he will be able to make progress; whereas if I see that a particular person is capable of doing a particular work — another work, you understand — and I tell him, “No, that work does not suit you, it is better that you do this one,” he will never be convinced (he or she, it doesn't matter), he will always think that it's an arbitrary decision, that it's simply because one preferred his doing this thing or that. So from his personal point of view it is better to let him do what he asks for, so that he may make the progress he ought to make. If it happens that he is very conscious of the work he can do and asks precisely for the work he ought to do, then it is good, there's no more discussion, it is very good.

But in certain cases, perhaps it is not very good to let somebody muddle up and disturb the work in order that he may have an experience of this. So if the work which is to be done is more important than the person's yoga, he is told, “No, I am sorry, but you are not capable of doing that. You must do this.” Only, this increases the difficulty for him (or her), as I said; for he will remain convinced that his choice was better than the one made by somebody else; whereas by experience, when he has really failed in what he has undertaken, he will understand that he has made a mistake.

Now, I am repeating it: if he happens to be conscious of what he can truly do, one has only to let him do what he wants, it is very good, this. There's no problem. There is no difference between the perception of what he ought to do and what he chooses to do; in this case there is no problem. So it depends absolutely on the case, and on the nature of the work to be done.

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It's exactly the same thing as the problem of the education of children. There are all kinds of different and even opposite theories. Some people say, "Children must be left to have their own experience because it is through experience that they learn things best." Like that, as an idea, it is excellent; in practice it obviously requires some reservations, because if you let a child walk on the edge of a wall and he falls and breaks a leg or his head, the experience is a little hard; or if you let him play with a match-box and he burns out his eyes, you understand, it is paying very dearly for a little knowledge! I have discussed this with... I don't remember now who it was... an educationist, a man concerned with education, who had come from England, and had his ideas about the necessity of an absolute liberty. I made this remark to him; then he said, "But for the love of liberty one can sacrifice the life of many people." It is one opinion. (*Mother laughs*)

At the same time, the opposite excess of being there all the time and preventing a child from making his experiment, by telling him, "Don't do this, this will happen", "Don't do that, that will happen" — then finally he will be all shrunk up into himself, and will have neither courage nor boldness in life, and this too is very bad.

In fact it comes to this:

One must never make rules.

Every minute one must endeavour to apply the highest truth one can perceive. It is much more difficult, but it's the only solution.

Whatever you may do, don't make rules beforehand, because once you have made a rule you follow it more or less blindly, and then you are sure, ninety-nine and a half times out of a hundred, to be mistaken.

There is only one way of acting truly, it is to try at each moment, each second, in each movement to express only the highest truth one can perceive, and at the same time know that this perception has to be progressive and that what seems to

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you the most true now will no longer be so tomorrow, and that a higher truth will have to be expressed more and more through you. This leaves no room any longer for sleeping in a comfortable *tamas*; one must be always awake — I am not speaking of physical sleep — one must be always awake, always conscious and always full of an enlightened receptivity and of goodwill. To want always the best, always the best, always the best and never tell oneself, “Oh! It is tiring! Let me rest, let me relax! Ah, I am going to stop making an effort”; then one is sure to fall into a hole immediately and make a big stupid blunder!

The rest must not be one which goes down into the inconscience and *tamas*. The rest must be an ascent into the Light, into perfect Peace, total Silence, a rest which rises up out of the darkness. Then it is true rest, a rest which is an ascent.

Sweet Mother, the “Dortoir” children told me to ask you if it is good to read the illustrated “classics”.

Read what?

“Classics Illustrated”!

Whatever is that? (*Laughter*)

(The child gives Mother a copy of these “Classics”)
Nowadays all children read this and they told me that they read it even during the class, when the teacher is speaking of something else.

Well, what is this stuff? (*Mother turns over the pages*) Ooooh! Where does it come from, this thing?

From America.

It is American? (*Mother turns some more pages*) Well, my children, it is lamentably vulgar! There, that’s all I can say about it.

Questions and Answers

Nowadays there are hundreds of these things here, Sweet Mother!

There are hundreds of copies?

Yes, Mother. They make collections of them.

(Another child) Of different books, not the same books.

(Pavitra) More than a hundred.

(Second child) Different books, not this.

(First child) All books; of the best books they make this and then the children read this stuff and don't read the books.

(Second child) In all languages.

Yes, it is a sign of the times. It is the vulgarisation of everything: the vulgarisation of ideas, the vulgarisation of masterpieces, the vulgarisation of history, everything; everything put as low as possible, so that one doesn't need to raise oneself, one can crawl on the ground and have this. It is the descent of the consciousness as low as possible and then one wallows there!

Oh, no! It is repulsive!

However, that's your business! If you like to live like animals which love to waddle in mud, do that, it's your affair. That's all. It is deplorable!

Good, the question is closed, without any amendment.

Now I don't give orders; each one follows his own consciousness. If you want to go down it is a very good means. *(Laughter)*

If you want to go up, well, I advise you to throw it away into the street. Oh! It doesn't matter where. It's not worth keeping — anywhere.

Mother, it is the older children who spread it among the little ones.

Yes.

And without asking you.

They have asked me. Just asked me.

They had already done this before asking you.

Well! Is it in the Library that you get these things?

No, Mother.

Ah! (*Laughter*)

Medhananda is feeling nervous.

Just imagine, even when these things are given to you on a record (we had some records) well, even that... I was just on the point of saying, "Well, it is a little vulgar." Because, so that the record may sell and be heard by everybody, they bring down the artistic value of the thing a little, in order to put it within the range of the public... and it was a bit grandiloquent, forced, it did not have all the purity of the original. *Julius Caesar* was played to us one day, you know. Well, there already I made my reservations; I told myself, "It is falsifying people's taste." Instead of having the pure nobility of the thing, it exaggerates just a little in order to please the greatest number.

So you understand, this was already a summit in comparison. At least, it had some aspirations to artistic realisation. It was not altogether well realised but there was an effort.

This thing is the very opposite. Still...!

Now, be courageous! How many of you have read these books?

(Many children raise their hands).

Good heavens! And you have the cheek to ask me to give meditations! Well, here's a fine preparation for meditating!

Questions and Answers

I read a few just to see, Sweet Mother.

Good.

Well, this evening I won't give you any meditation. It will be for next week, if you like, but not this evening.

There, then! *Au revoir.*

7 September 1955

Mother reads from *Lights on Yoga*, “Work”.

“All work” is “a school of experience”?

Yes, surely. You don’t understand?

No, Mother.

If you don’t do anything, you cannot have any experience. The whole life is a field of experience. Each movement you make, each thought you have, each work you do, can be an experience, and *must be* an experience; and naturally work in particular is a field of experience where one must apply all the progress which one endeavours to make inwardly.

If you remain in meditation or contemplation without working, well, you don’t know if you have progressed or not. You may live in an illusion, the illusion of your progress; while if you begin to work, all the circumstances of your work, the contact with others, the material occupation, all this is a field of experience in order that you may become aware not only of the progress made but of all the progress that remains to be made. If you live closed up in yourself, without acting, you may live in a completely subjective illusion; the moment you externalise your action and enter into contact with others, with circumstances and the objects of life, you become aware absolutely objectively of whether you have made progress or not, whether you are more calm, more conscious, stronger, more unselfish, whether you no longer have any desire, any preference, any weakness, any unfaithfulness — you can become aware of all this by working. But if you remain enclosed in a meditation that’s altogether personal, you may enter into a total illusion and never come out

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of it, and believe that you have realised extraordinary things, while really you have only the impression, the illusion that you have done so.

That's what Sri Aurobindo means.

Then, Mother why do all the spiritual schools in India have as their doctrine escape from action?

Yes, because all this is founded upon the teaching that life is an illusion. It began with the teaching of the Buddha who said that existence was the fruit of desire, and that there was only one way of coming out of misery and suffering and desire; it was to come out of existence. And then this continued with Shankara who added that not only is it the fruit of desire but it is a total illusion, and as long as you live in this illusion you cannot realise the Divine. For him there was not even the Divine, I think; for the Buddha, at least, there wasn't any.

Then did they truly have experiences?

That depends on what you call "experience". They certainly had an inner contact with something.

The Buddha certainly had an inner contact with something which, in comparison with the external life, was a non-existence; and in this non-existence, naturally, all the results of existence disappear. There is a state like this; it is even said that if one can keep this state for twenty days, one is sure to lose one's body; if it is exclusive, I quite agree with it.

But it may be an experience which remains at the back, you see, and is conscious even while not being exclusive, and which causes the contact with the world and the outer consciousness to be supported by something that is free and independent. This indeed is a state in which one can truly make very great progress externally, because one can be detached from everything and act without attachment, without preference, with that inner

freedom which is expressed outwardly.

Yet this is the real necessity: once this inner freedom has been attained and the conscious contact with what is eternal and infinite, then, without losing this consciousness one must return to action and let that influence the whole consciousness turned towards action.

This is what Sri Aurobindo calls bringing down the Force from above. In this way there is a chance of being able to change the world, because one has brought in a new Force, a new region, a new consciousness and put it into contact with the outer world. So its presence and action will produce inevitable changes and, let us hope, a total transformation in what this outer world is.

So we could say that the Buddha quite certainly had the first part of the experience, but that he never dreamt of the second, because it was contrary to his own theory. His theory was that one had to run away; but it is obvious that there is only one way of escape, to die, and yet, as he himself has said so well, you may be dead and be completely attached to life and still be in the cycle of births and not have liberation. And in fact he has admitted the idea that it is by successive passing lives on the earth that one can manage to develop oneself to reach this liberation. But for him the ideal was that the world would not exist any longer. It was as though he accused the Divine of having made a mistake and that there was only one thing to do, to rectify the mistake by annulling it. But naturally, to be reasonable and logical, he did not admit the Divine. It was a mistake made by whom, how, in what way? — this he never explained. He simply said that it was made and that the world had begun with desire and had to end with desire. He was just on the point of saying that this world was purely subjective, that is, a collective illusion, and that if the illusion ceased the world would cease to be. But he did not come so far. It is Shankara who took over and made the thing altogether complete in his teaching.

If we go back to the teaching of the Rishis, for example, there was no idea of flight out of the world; for them the realisation

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had to be terrestrial. They conceived a Golden Age very well, in which the realisation would be terrestrial. But starting from a certain decline of vitality in the spiritual life of the country, perhaps, from a different orientation which came in, you see... it is certainly starting from the teaching of the Buddha that this idea of flight came, which has undermined the vitality of the country, because one had to make an effort to cut oneself off from life. The outer reality became an illusory falsehood, and one had no longer to have anything to do with it. So naturally one was cut off from the universal energy, and the vitality went on diminishing, and with this vitality all the possibilities of realisation also diminished.

But it is very remarkable... I have met many people who were trying this method of detachment and separation from life, and living exclusively in the inner reality. These people, almost all of them, had in the outer life absolutely gross defects. When they returned to the ordinary consciousness, they were very much lower than one of the élite, for instance, a man of great culture and great intellectual and moral development. These people in their ordinary conduct, when they came out of their meditation, their exclusive concentration, lived very grossly. They had very, very ordinary defects, you see. I knew many of this kind. Or perhaps they had come to a stage where their outer life was a sort of dream in which they were, so to say, not existing. But one had altogether the impression of beings who were completely incomplete, totally incomplete, that is, outwardly there was nothing at all.

But if in the outer consciousness one is very low, how can one meditate? It becomes very difficult, doesn't it?

Yes, very difficult!

Then how do these people succeed?

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But they came out of it completely, they left it as one takes off a cloak, then they put it aside and entered another part of their being. And this is what happened exactly, it was as though they took away this consciousness, laid it aside and entered another part of their being. And in their meditation, as long as they remained there, it was very good. But these people, most of them, when in that state, were in a kind of samadhi, and they could not even speak; and so when they came back and returned to the ordinary consciousness, it was just where it was before, completely unchanged; there was no contact.

You see, what makes the thing difficult for you to understand is that you *don't know* concretely, practically, that there are... different planes of your being, as of all beings, which may not have any contact among themselves, and that one may very well pass from one plane to another, and live in a certain consciousness, leaving the other absolutely asleep. And moreover, even in activity, at different times different states of being enter into activity, and unless one takes the greatest care to unify them, put them all in harmony, one of them may pull from one side, another from the other, and a third pull from the third, and all of them be absolutely in contradiction with one another.

There are people who in a certain state of being are constructive, for example, and capable of organising their life and doing very useful work, and in another part of their being they are absolutely destructive and constantly demolish what the other has constructed. I knew quite a number of people of this kind who, apparently had a rather incoherent life, but it was because the two parts of the being, instead of completing each other and harmonising in a synthesis, were separated and in opposition, and one undid what the other did, and all the time they passed like this from one to the other. They had a disorganised life. And there are more people of this kind than one would think!

There are very outstanding examples, striking ones, so clear and distinct they are; but less totally opposed conditions, though all the same in opposition to one another, occur very, very often.

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Besides, one has oneself the experience, when one has tried to make progress; there is one part of the being which participates in the effort and makes progress, and suddenly, without rhyme or reason, all the effort one has made, all the consciousness one has gained, capsizes in something which is quite different, opposed, over which one has no control.

Some people can make an effort the whole day through, succeed in building something within themselves; they go to sleep at night and the next morning all that they had done on the previous day is lost, they have lost it in a state of unconsciousness. This happens very often, these are not exceptional cases, far from it. And this is what explains, you see, why some people — when they withdraw into their higher mind for instance — can enter into very deep meditation and be liberated from the things of this world, and then when they return to their ordinary physical consciousness, are absolutely ordinary if not even vulgar, because they haven't taken care to establish any contact, and to see that what is above acts and transforms what is below.

That's all.

Mother, about the Buddha I have a question. You said that the Avatar comes to the earth to show that the Divine can live upon the earth. Then why did he preach just the contrary? Is he an Avatar or not?

That!... Some people say he was an Avatar, others say no, but this, to tell you the truth, it is...

I think that this first thing, that the Avatar comes to the earth to prove that the Divine can... it is not so much to prove by words as to prove by a certain realisation; and I think that it would be rather this aspect of the Divine which is constructive and preservative, rather than a transformative and destructive aspect. You see, to use the Indian names known in India, well, I think they are Avatars of Vishnu who come rather to prove

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that the Divine can come upon earth; whereas each time Shiva has manifested he has always manifested like this, in beings who have tried to fight against an illusion and demolish what is there.

I have reasons to think that the Buddha was one. To speak more accurately, he manifested something of the power of Shiva: it was the same compassion, the same understanding of all the misery, and the same power which destroys — obviously with the intention of transforming, but destroys rather than constructs. His work does not seem to have been very constructive. It was very necessary to teach men practically not to be egoistic; from that point of view it was very necessary. But in its deeper principle it has not helped very much in the transformation of the earth.

As I said, you see, instead of helping the descent of the higher Consciousness into the terrestrial life, it has strongly encouraged the separation of the deeper consciousness, which he said was the only true one, from all outer expression.

Now, you see, this question of the Divine upon the earth: well, quite naturally those who believed in him have made a god of him. One has only to see all the temples and all the Buddhist godheads to know that human nature has always the tendency to deify what it admires.

So, there it is!

There is something else we would like to ask. There are many discussions on this subject: should we take any interest in those songs which have no meaning, usually cinema songs?

Take interest? How do you mean?

There are many who listen to these songs and sing them also.

Yes, but I don't understand "taking interest". One may like these

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things because one has no taste, but I don't see what is meant by "taking interest". One takes interest in a study, one takes interest in a work, one takes interest in the progress to be made, but... One may indulge in an activity of idleness, but that doesn't mean that one can take any interest in it.

If one has to sing these songs?

Has to? Why? To earn your living? (*Laughter*)

Isn't it an obstacle to our progress?

But everything that brings down the consciousness is an obstacle in one's progress. If you have a desire it creates an obstacle in your progress; if you have a bad thought or bad will, it creates an obstacle in your progress; if you welcome some kind of falsehood, it creates an obstacle in your progress; and if you cultivate vulgarity in yourself, it creates an obstacle in your progress; everything which is not in keeping with the Truth creates an obstacle to progress; and there are hundreds of these things every day.

For example, every movement of impatience, every movement of anger, every movement of violence, every tendency to dissimulation, every deformation of the truth, whether big or small, every bad will, every partial judgment, every preference, every encouragement to bad taste and to... yes, to vulgarity, all this is constantly in the way. All this, every one of these movements, big or small, passing or lasting, all are like so many stones to build the wall to prevent yourself from progressing. It is not one thing only, there are hundreds of them, thousands. It is enough to have a preference in oneself, it is enough to be impatient, enough to have a little desire to conceal something, enough to feel a disgust, a distaste for effort, it is enough... anything at all is enough, which has something to do with desires, repulsions, all that, for it to impede your progress. And then,

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from the point of view of the intellectual being, the artistic being, the side of inner and outer culture, every lack of taste, whatever it may be, is a terrible obstacle.

This world, I must say, is a world of extremes from the point of view of taste, artistic and literary culture; on one side, it makes a great effort to discover something that's very high, very pure, very noble, and on the other, at the other end, it sinks into a vulgarity which certainly is infinitely greater than the vulgarity of the past two or three centuries. What is curious is that, going back two or three centuries, people who were uncultured were gross, but their grossness resembled that of animals, and there was not much perversion in it; there was a little, because as soon as the mind is there, perversion comes in, but there was not a great deal of perversion. But now, what does not rise to the mountain-peak, what remains on ground-level, is *absolutely* perverted in its grossness, that is, it is not only ignorant and stupid, it is ugly, dirty and repugnant, it is deformed, it is wicked, it is *very* low. And it is indeed the wrong use of the mind which has produced this. Without the mind this perversion did not exist, but it's the wrong use of the mind which produces this perversion. Well, it has become what is ugly from every point of view, now, what is vulgar and ugly.

There are things, things considered very pretty nowadays... I have seen photographs or reproductions which are considered very fine but they are *frightfully* vulgar in their perversion, and yet people go into ecstasies over them and find them pretty! It's because there is something deformed, not only without culture, not only undeveloped, but deformed, something that's much worse, because it is much more difficult to restore something perverted and deformed than to enlighten something ignorant and uneducated. Well, I think some things have been great instruments of perversion, and among these one may put the cinema. It could have been, and I hope it will become, an instrument of education and development; but for the moment it has been an instrument of perversion, and of a truly hideous perversion:

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perversion of taste, perversion of consciousness, and everything with a terrible moral and physical ugliness. Yet it is something which can be used for education, progress, culture and artistic development; and from this point of view it could be a means of spreading beauty and culture much more widely and making them much more accessible to all, than the former methods could do. But it is always like this — for what can be better, if it is not better, it becomes worse. And as I said at the beginning, we are in a period of excesses — excess in every way — a thing tries excessively to perfect itself and falls into excesses of perversion which, relatively, are as great if not greater. And if one looks attentively at oneself, one becomes aware that naturally, as one lives in the world as it is at present, one shares in its vulgarity, and that unless one observes oneself closely and constantly puts the light of one's highest consciousness upon oneself, one risks making mistakes in taste, from the spiritual point of view, rather frequently.

There we are!

Now I am going to give you a meditation this evening, and I am going to see whether you are capable of taking a cerebral bath. Cleansing!

Mother, when we meditate here, on which centre should we concentrate?

Truly speaking, each time it ought to be different.

The first time I told you to meditate upon what we had read, didn't I? Well, if you like, today we could try to let a purifying consciousness enter into us, which will give us, as I just said jokingly, a brain bath, that is, a good little cleansing — a light which purifies and cleans.

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Mother reads *The Great Secret*¹: The Statesman.

Sweet Mother, what should be the attitude of a true politician?

But it's just the attitude of a true politician which I have given here. It's the ideal politician, my child. One can't make a better one. It is the circumstances, he says that himself: "a greater force than mine..." it's the way the world is organised; he started with the best intentions, he tried his very best, he could do nothing, because one can't do anything in the present circumstances and with politics as it is practised at present. Usually people are not frank enough to say what I have made him say. I have made him speak the truth and this proves that he is extremely frank; otherwise, usually they cover all their misdeeds with beautiful words, but the misdeeds are there all the same. The world is organised in such a way that one can't be otherwise. If one were a man who did not accept any kind of compromise, one could not remain in politics; one would quite simply be pushed out by the very force of things. There will be a time when all this will change, but not yet. Politics is perhaps the last thing which will change. There are many others which must change before. It is certainly one of the most recalcitrant things.

There are two things which it is very difficult to change: finance and politics; the field of money and the field of government are the two points where man is weakest and most attached to falsehood. So, probably, transformation will come there last

¹ A drama arranged and partly written by Mother, in six monologues and a conclusion, staging six of the most famous men of the world and an Unknown Man in a life-boat in which they have taken refuge after the ship which was taking them to a World Conference on Human Progress capsized on the high seas.

On Education, CWM, Vol. 12, pp. 471–96

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of all. One can hope for a social transformation, an economic transformation, a transformation of education; one can hope for all this long before the transformation of politics and of finance. I wrote this precisely to show people what the real state of the world is, and to give an indication of the way to get out of it. But when we are at the point of coming out, you will see that it is not so easy. Perhaps the first thing that will be transformed will be the scientific world, it is possible; because there a very great sincerity is required and a very persevering effort, and these already are qualities which open for you the door to a higher life.... But we shall come to this next time... no, not next time, after two lessons.

Here we are, my children. No other questions? Nobody has anything to say?

Sweet Mother, the politician in the world today who is on the level of the one in the drama, one who is trying to do his best, isn't he guided by the Divine? Will he find the means of...

He has not said that he was religious at all. He hasn't told us that. He hasn't said that it was for spiritual or religious reasons that he was trying to do this.

Note that they are all going to a congress on human progress, they are not going to a religious conference at all. In fact your question makes no sense, because there is nothing in the universe which is not made by the Divine, so from that point of view the question makes no sense. Consciously, in himself, he should be a religious man for him to do something for religious reasons. It is not mentioned, and deliberately not mentioned, so as not to introduce another factor in the problem. He is not doing this at all as a service to the Divine. He is doing it because he has humanitarian ideas and is trying to improve the human situation upon earth, that's all. All of them, by the way, all are in the same condition.

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Mother, as during the war, the last war, there were great statesmen who...

But this is taken almost exactly after one of them, a famous figure.

But they became the Divine's instruments during the war!

All, all are the Divine's instruments, if you want to look at it in a certain way. No, they were not at all consciously the Divine's instruments; not conscious at all, at all, at all. They used to mouth big religious words. I took them away because they were insincerities and I wanted to make my fellow as sincere as possible, and their big religious words were absolutely insincere, it was blackmail; the proof is that they forgot them all immediately as soon as they were victorious.

Mother, how did he know at the end that he had not found the truth if he had not been open...

What! How did he...?

(Pavitra) How did he know that he had not found the truth... if he had not been open to something higher?

But who knew it, my man or the other..

(Pavitra) The moment he is conscious that there is something which he has not found, it means that he was open to something else.

Yes, naturally, all goodwill is open to a deeper consciousness. That goes without saying. I tell you, I have taken very exceptional persons who are ready to understand, otherwise it could

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not be done. I have made them better than they really are, because all had something else behind their aspiration; they are not aware of it, but these are people on the point of understanding and it is in this way, you see, that I could organise the thing; it is not an exact copy of nature, it is something arranged to prove something — that's all — as always in literature.

Mother, this gives us the hope that in the world today and especially in India, there are...

Gives the hope! I think that it's not this that gives the hope; if one had before oneself only the model of those who exist in the world, there wouldn't be much hope.

Mother, in the present world politics is divided into two big camps, that of America and that of Russia. How will the reconciliation come?

Oh! It is very easy. It's simply because they don't at all understand that it is very easy that I say that it is the last thing that will happen. These things are only appearances and superficial ideas and interests — interests! not even true interests: ideas which they have about their interests. But if the true solution were found... not if it were found — perhaps it is found — if the true economic solution were applied, the very basis of their problems would collapse, there would remain only the political attitude which is very, very superficial. It is very shallow, it has no depth, it is above all just words, very hollow words; it sounds very loud because it is hollow, they are big words. But, you see, the only fairly true support of their attitude lies in the two things I have spoken about: a financial support and an economic support. Well, if the economic problem were solved, that is, if the solution were applied, the major part of the support of these political differences would disappear. It is based almost exclusively on an opposite way

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of looking at the problems of life and the solution of these problems: these think that it is like this, the others think that it is like that. I am speaking of the most sincere ones, not of those who have constructed things out of nothing at all, precisely, as I said, to make a lot of noise and have a lot of influence. But if we go to the heart of the question, there isn't so much difference.

There are many people — I am speaking of people, not of individuals but governments — who pretend that they are not communists and have a way of acting that's absolutely communistic, still more drastic than the communists'. Therefore all this is a matter of words. One puts words as one puts a certain cloak on the things one does, it changes just the appearance, but the inside is not very different. Besides, one thing is quite simple, that the whole of mankind follows an evolution, an evolutionary curve, and that there are ages, certain ages in which there is a certain experience which becomes almost universal, that is, terrestrial, entirely terrestrial, but indeed under different names, labels, words; it is nearly the same experience which continues. So there are the old ones which are in the course of disappearing and yet cling on, which yet change the appearance and the substance of certain new things. But it's only like the tail of something. The whole new movement is going towards an experience which becomes as common as possible, because it is useful only if it is common. If it is localised, it is like a mushroom, it gives no fruit for the general human consciousness. The great human experiences have to be gone through, more or less thoroughly, by the whole of mankind, and it is done in this way. It is only man's thoughts which fix other words, other forms, other reasons, other justifications, other legitimisations on what they do; but when one comes to the fact it is very similar. Only, in order to do that, particularly, it is necessary to see beyond the simple appearances.

During the war between Germany and England it was

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known on which side the Divine was, the divine Force which was fighting against the asuric forces...

Known to whom?

Here.

Ah, of course!

In present-day politics can we say in which camp...

Unfortunately, things become completely clear-cut in this way — to the extent that one can say these are for and these against — only when there is that frightful materialisation of a war, because at that moment it is obvious that the victory of one side is preferable to the victory of the other, not that these are better than the others — this is understood, that from the divine point of view all are equal in worth, it's the same thing — but because the consequences of the victory are such that the victory of one side is better than that of another. But this is when the thing becomes absolutely brutal, a reciprocal extermination. Otherwise, to tell the real truth, the divine Force acts for its work everywhere, in men's errors as in their goodwill, through ill-will as through favourable things. There is nothing that's not mixed; nowhere is there something which could be said to be truly a pure instrument of the Divine, and nowhere is there an absolute impossibility of the Divine's using a man or action to go forward on the path. So, as long as things are uncertain, the Divine works everywhere almost equally. If men go in for such a great madness, then it is different. But it is truly a "great madness", in the sense that it precipitates a whole mass of individuals and wills into an activity which leads straight to destruction — their own destruction. I am not speaking of bombs and the destruction of a city or a people, I am speaking of destruction as it is spoken about in the Gita, you see, when it

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is said that the Asura goes to his own destruction. That's what happens, and this is a very great misfortune, because it is always better to be able to save, illumine, transform, than to have to destroy brutally. And it is this terrible choice of the war which is its true horror; it's that it materialises the conflict so brutally and totally that some elements which could have been saved during peace are, because of war, necessarily destroyed — and not only men and things but forces, the conscience of beings.

Has India a special role to play in present-day politics?

Politics! I told you at the very beginning that politics is something completely... unconverted. Then how can there be a true political role?

India has a role to fulfil in the world. But this is something ideal and one that requires a conversion which... in any case, it has not yet taken place, as far as I know. From the superficial, external point of view she could play her part if she were sincere. That's all that I can say. But it is also necessary to have the precise knowledge.

(Long silence)

These things cannot be spoken about.

When this Statesman finds the truth, the problems won't be the same, will they?

What? My Statesman! All must find the truth. Then naturally when they have all found the truth, things will be different. So!... We are going to ponder over this problem!

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Mother reads *The Great Secret*: The Writer.

Sweet Mother, here it is written: "The word is sufficiently immaterial to be in contact with subtle things, forces and vibrations, principles and ideas."

My children, I have to tell you to begin with that this is "literature". So you should not ask me for explanations. It is a literary way of speaking, you must understand it in a literary way; it is a literary description of the word; it is very precise, but it is literary. So I cannot produce literature on this literature. One must have the taste for forms, for a beautiful way of saying things, a little exceptional, not too banal; but it is just one way, it's a way of saying things which is charming. Literature exists completely in the way of saying things. You catch what you can of what's behind. If you are indeed open to the literary meaning, it evokes things for you; but it cannot be explained. It is a means of evocation which corresponds also with music. Naturally, one can analyse literature and see how the sentence is constructed, but this is like your changing a human being into a skeleton. It is not pretty, a skeleton. It's the same thing. If in music you study counterpoint, and if this note must necessarily bring in this other, and this group of notes has necessarily to bring in that one, you spoil the music too, you make a skeleton of the music; it is not interesting. These things have to be felt with the corresponding senses, the charm of the phrase with the literary sense — catching the harmony of words and what it evokes.

In each one of these persons it is the same thing: you are given a description of people who have reached the highest human possibility. It is obvious that this Writer is a very great one, the best that can be conceived. Well, he has come to this.

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And then at last he has realised that it was hollow, that he lacked the essential thing. And for all it will be the same experience.

Last time we said that it was an exceptional Statesman. Well, we can say this time that it is an exceptional Writer who has reached the psychological point where he can awaken to another consciousness, a higher consciousness. And yet the description he gives is truly that of the highest human possibilities. He did not see things as they are, lifeless, he saw the spirit which was behind, he communicated with it, he tried to express it and he made... he went as far as a human consciousness can go. And then he found himself before a precipice. How to cross over to the other side? Everything is like that, you see. We shall have to repeat the same thing each time.

There, then.

No questions?

Sweet Mother, how can literature help us to progress?

It can help you to become more intelligent, to understand things better, to have a sense of literary forms, to cultivate your taste, to know how to choose between a good and a bad way of saying things, to enrich your spirit. It can help you in a hundred different ways.

There are many different kinds of progress. And if one wants to progress integrally, one must progress in all these different directions. Well, this one is an intellectual and artistic progress at the same time, in which both combine. One plays with ideas, is capable of understanding them, classifying them, organising them, and at the same time one plays with the form of these ideas, the way of expressing them, the way of saying, the way of presenting them and making them intelligible.

Sweet Mother, all that we read in literature — stories, novels, etc. — very often contains stuff which lowers our consciousness. It is not altogether possible to leave out

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the matter and read only from the point of view of the literary value.

You see, there is no excuse for reading any odd novels except when they are remarkably written and you want to learn the language — if they are written either in your own language or in another one and you want to study this language, then you may read anything at all provided that it is well written. It's not what is said that's interesting, it's the way of saying it. And so the way to read it is exactly to be concerned only with the way it has been said, and not with what is said, which is uninteresting. Only, for instance, in a book, there are always descriptions; well, you see how these descriptions are made and how the author has chosen the words to express things. And for ideas it is the same thing: how he has made his characters speak; you take no interest in what they say but in how they say it. If you take certain books like study books, to learn just how to write sentences well and express things as you should, because these books are very well written, what the story is has not much importance. But if you start reading books for what they narrate, then in that case you must be much stricter and not take things which darken your consciousness, because that's a waste of time; it's worse than a waste of time. So, things like vulgar stories which are written in a vulgar way, about these, you see, there's no longer any question. These things you should never touch. And yet this is the currency which circulates everywhere, above all in our times, it seems, because men have invented methods for cheap printing, for making cheap illustrations. So they flood the country and all other countries with worthless literature, which is badly written, ill-conceived, and which expresses vulgar things and coarsens you with vulgar ideas and completely spoils your taste through vulgar pictures. All this happens because from the point of view of production they succeed in making things very cheap, what are called popular editions "accessible to all". But as the aim of these people is not at all either to educate or to

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help men to progress, far from that — they hope on the contrary that people don't progress, because if they did they would no longer buy their wares — so their intention is to make money at the expense of those who read their literature, and so the more it sells, the better it is. It may be frightful, but it's very good if it sells well. It's the same thing with art, the same thing with music, the same thing with drama.

The latest scientific discoveries, applied to life, have put within the reach of everyone all kinds of things which formerly were reserved only for the intellectual and artistic élite; and to justify their effort and profit by their work, they have made things which can sell most, that is, the lowest, most ordinary, most vulgar things, the easiest to understand because they require no effort and no education. And the whole world is drowned under these things, to such an extent that when there's someone who has written a good book or a fine play, there is no longer any place for him anywhere, because the whole place has been taken up by these things.

Naturally there are sensible people who try to react; but it is very difficult. First of all the commercial mentality should be driven out from the world. This will take some time. There are a few signs that it is perhaps less respected than before. There was a time when, you see, one was considered a criminal if he didn't know how to do business, and he who had the audacity to spend his capital, even for very good things, was fit to be sent to a madhouse. It is a little better now, but still we are quite far from the real situation; there is yet the golden calf, there, reigning over the world; before it is pulled down some time will yet go by, I am afraid. This has so perverted men's mind, that it is for them the criterion. You see, in America when someone is spoken about, it is said: "He, oh, he is worth a million dollars!" This indeed is the greatest compliment one can pay. And it is this: someone asks, "Do you know this person? What is he worth?" — "He is worth a hundred thousand dollars", "He is worth five hundred dollars." So this means that he has a position which

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brings him this. "Is he intelligent, is he stupid? Is he..." This is not at all important. "Is he a good man or a bad one?" That makes no difference at all! "Is he a rich man or a poor one?" If he is rich, ah, ah! "I would like to know him very much! If he is poor, I have nothing to do with him." There! Naturally America is a young country, so its ways are those of a child, but of a fairly ill-bred child. But the older countries have become too old and can no longer react, they shake their heads and wonder if after all this youth is not right. Everything is like that. The world is very ill.

That's all.

Sweet Mother, how should one choose one's books?

It would be better to ask someone who knows. If you ask someone who, at least, has taste and some knowledge of literature, he won't make you read badly written books. Now, if you want to read something which helps you from the spiritual point of view, that's another matter, you must ask someone who has a spiritual realisation to help you.

You see, there are two very different lines; they can converge because everything can be made to converge; but as I said, there are two lines really very different. One is a perpetual choice, not only of what one reads but of what one does, of what one thinks, of all one's activities, of strictly doing only what can help you on the spiritual path; it does not necessarily have to be very narrow and limited, but it must be on a little higher plane than the ordinary life, and with a concentration of will and aspiration which does not allow any wandering on the path, going here and there uselessly. This is austere; it is difficult to take up this when one is very young, because one feels that the instrument that he is has not been sufficiently formed or is not rich enough to be allowed to remain what it is without growing and progressing. So, generally speaking, except for a very small number, it comes later, after a certain development and some

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experience of life. The other path is that of as complete, as integral a development as possible of all human faculties, of all that one carries in himself, all one's possibilities, then, spreading out as widely as possible in all directions, in order to fill one's consciousness with all human possibilities, to know the world and life and men and their work as it now is, to create a vast and rich base for the future ascent.

Usually this is what we expect of children; except as I said, in absolutely rare, exceptional cases of children who have in them a psychic being which has already had all the experiences before incarnating this time, and no longer needs any more experiences, which only wants to realise the Divine and live Him. But these, you see, are one-in-a-million cases. Otherwise, till a certain age, so long as one is very young, it is good to develop oneself, to spread out as much as possible in all directions, to draw out all the potentialities one holds, and turn them into expressed, conscious, active things, so as to have a fairly solid foundation for the ascent. Otherwise it is a bit poor.

That is why you must learn, love to learn, always learn, not waste your time in... well, in filling yourself with useless things or doing useless things. You must do everything with this aim, to enrich your possibilities, develop those you have, acquire new ones, and become as complete, as perfect a human being as you can. That is, even on this line you must take things seriously, not simply pass your time because you are here, and waste it as much as possible because you have to pass it somehow.

That is the attitude of men in general: they come into life, they don't know why; they know that they will live a certain number of years, they don't know why; they think that they will have to pass away because everybody passes away, and they again don't know why; and then, most of the time they are bored because they have nothing in themselves, they are empty beings and there is nothing more boring than emptiness; and so they try to fill this by distraction, they become absolutely useless, and when they reach the end they have wasted their

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whole existence, all their possibilities — and everything is lost. This you will see: take a thousand men, out of them at least nine hundred and ninety are in this condition. It happens that they are born in certain circumstances or certain others, and they try, you see, to pass their time as well as they can, to be bored as little as possible, to suffer as little as possible, to have as good a time as possible; and everything is dull, lifeless, useless, stupid, and absolutely without any result. There, then. This is the majority of human beings, and they don't even think... they don't even ask themselves, "But indeed, why am I here? Why is there an earth? Why are there men? Why do I live?" No, all these things are absolutely uninteresting. The only interesting thing is to try to eat well, to have good fun, be nicely distracted, well married, have children, earn money and have all the advantages one can get from the point of view of desires, and above all, above all not think, not reflect, not ask any questions, and avoid all trouble. Yes, and then get out of it like that, without too many catastrophes. This is the general condition; this is what men call being reasonable. And in this way the world can turn round indefinitely for eternity, it will never progress. And this is why all these are like ants; they come, crawl, die, go away, come back, crawl again, die again, and so on. And it can last for eternities like this. Fortunately there are some who do the work of all the others, but it's only these who will make everything change one day.

So the first problem is to know on which side one wants to be: on the side of those who are doing something or the side of those who do nothing; on the side of those who, perhaps, will be able to understand what life is and do what is necessary for this life to culminate in something, or else of those who hardly care to understand anything at all and try to pass their time in having as few botherations as possible. Above all, no botherations!

There we are. This is the first choice. After this there are many others.

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So there, my children.

Now, if you wish to have a meditation, say so. Yes or no? Yes? Good! Try to eliminate from your consciousness all that is darkly attached to living uselessly.

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Mother reads *The Great Secret: The Scientist*.

I had the intention of leaving out the last speeches and going straight to the answer of the Unknown Man. But... I shall tell you, because it didn't raise... it seemed to me that it didn't give rise to enough questions to justify all the time we would spend in reading it... but it happens that, for this one, "The Scientist", someone who, by the way, is not here, has urgently asked two questions which seem interesting to me. So I shall read "The Scientist" today, and next week we shall directly take up "The Unknown Man".

(After Mother has read "The Scientist", Pavitra gets ready to read the questions.)

So, will you read them, Pavitra? You can't see well? We can switch on the light again.

(Pavitra) No, no, it is all right, Mother.

The scientist speaks of two postulates with which he has undertaken the research of the secrets of Nature and which would have dwindled gradually.

"For me", he says, "ignorance was the primary if not the only evil..."

Isn't it truly so?

That is, put plainly the question is this: Isn't ignorance the first and perhaps even the *sole* evil of humanity?

Science, which considers the world from the most material point of view, has asserted it; and one of the greatest spiritual masters, one of the greatest enlighteners and minds which have

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sought for the solution of the ills of humanity on the extreme opposite plane, has said the same thing — I am speaking of the Buddha. And both are at once right and wrong, in the sense that each of them sees only one side of the question. It is true that one can reduce the difficulty to a certain aspect and that this makes it easier to solve the problem, though it's not sure whether the solution is absolutely effective. But in any case, if we speak of ignorance, if we see the problem from the angle of ignorance — that it's because man doesn't have the knowledge that he can't be saved — it seems obvious. But what knowledge are we speaking about?

The scientist will tell you: Study the laws of Nature, know all that it can teach you and it will give you the knowledge which will enable you to master life and become its possessor instead of being possessed by it. But here we see, according to what we have just read, that as he goes on studying and searching, sincerely and more and more deeply, he becomes aware that there is something which eludes him, because, quite naturally, he comes to the limit of the material world and, there, he faces a precipice; he can no longer carry on his research in what is beyond, because the same methods don't suffice.

But if we take the question from the other end, we shall see that the ignorance the Buddha was speaking about was not at all that which consists in not knowing that if one swallows poison one is poisoned, or that if one keeps his head under water without breathing, he is sure to be drowned; it is not even in not knowing how Nature builds the atoms; but for him ignorance consisted in believing that the world was real and that life could be good if one had the good luck to live in favourable conditions. To come into the world was to be born into ignorance; it was the result, according to him, of a desire to live; and as this desire for life was in itself the supreme ignorance, if one abolished desire, quite naturally after some time one would abolish life, since it is its result — life, the world and all this unhealthy and baneful appearance.

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So for him, to come out of the ignorance meant coming out of this false conviction that the world was something real, and above all, from the desire to live which was the supreme stupidity. Only, he found himself facing another problem which was at least as serious, if not still more so than the problem of the scientist. It was that his remedy was good only for the individual; it could apply only to an extremely limited number of individuals who had already undergone countless experiences, through lives as countless, to await the time when they were ready to understand this truth and liberate themselves from the world by liberating themselves from desire, and disappear into Nirvana.

But how can these final conversions be sufficiently multiplied so as to succeed in making the world disappear? This seems impossible, because the process is progressive and one must pass through all the stages of conscious life until one comes to the state when he is ready to take flight into Nirvana. And so, during all this time, what happens to all these poor people, not only to people but to animals also and to plants, to all this life which suffers and struggles and strains? So, even deprived of all hope... because at least the scientists tell you, "We are going to find the means of making life more comfortable for you." They don't seem to have discovered this very well, because this kind of comfort complicates life and doesn't make it more pleasant. Still at least they give you a gleam of hope, while the other tells you, "Wait, wait. When your turn comes you will pass over to the other side." But while waiting one is not happy. So perhaps it could be said that this way of approaching the problem is not altogether satisfactory, for it is a purely and exclusively mental way, and can satisfy only those who have a mental life, and they do not form the majority. Besides, this is what has caused all religions to be vulgarised, even those which had at the start something very high and very true to give; they have been obliged to reduce it to the proportion of the human consciousness. For humanity suffers and it is not with beautiful ideas that it is cured.

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Something else is necessary. This perhaps we shall see at the end when we come to it. For the moment...

(Pavitra) *The second postulate: "That it is possible to know the universe as it really is, to grasp its laws objectively."*

The kind of regularity which we observe in the universe and translate into what we call the laws of Nature — does it have an existence independent of us? Or is it that these so-called laws exist only in our mind?

Is it not possible to know the universe in its reality as it is in itself, independently of the observer or thinker?

Yes, there is a way: it is by identification. But obviously it is a means which eludes absolutely all physical methods. I think that this weakness comes solely from the method used, because one has remained in an absolutely superficial consciousness; and the phenomenon which took place the first time takes place again a second time. If you push your investigation far enough, you suddenly come to a point where your physical methods are no longer of any worth. And in fact one can know only what one is. So if you want to know the universe, you must become the universe. You cannot become the universe physically, you know; but perhaps there is a way of becoming the universe: it is in the consciousness.

If you identify your consciousness with the universal consciousness, then you know what is happening.

But that's the only way; there are no others. It is an absolute fact that one knows only what one is, and if one wants to know something, one must become that. So you see, there are many people who say, "It is impossible", but that's because they remain on a certain plane. It is obvious that if you remain only on the material plane or even on the mental plane, you cannot know the universe, because the mind is not universal; it is only a means of expression of the universe; and it is only by an essential

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identification that you can then know things, not from outside inwards but from inside outwards. This is not impossible. It is altogether possible. It has been done. But it can't be done with instruments, however perfected they may be. Here one must once again make something else intervene, other regions, other realities than purely material ones, including the mind which belongs to the physical life, the terrestrial life.

One can know everything, but one must know the way. And the way is not learnt through books, it cannot be written in numbers. It is only by practising... And here then, it demands an abnegation, a consecration, a perseverance and an obstinacy — still more considerable than what the sincerest, most honest, most unselfish scientists have ever shown. But I must say that the scientific method of work is a marvellous discipline; and what is curious is that the method recommended by the Buddha for getting rid of desires and the illusion of the world is also one of the most marvellous disciplines ever known on the earth. They are at the two ends, they are both excellent; those who follow one or the other in all sincerity truly prepare themselves for yoga. A small click, somewhere, is enough to make them leave their fairly narrow point of view on one side or the other so as to be able to enter into an integrality which will lead them to the supreme Truth and mastery.

I don't know whether ignorance is the greatest obstacle on the path of humanity... We said that it was an almost exclusively mental obstacle and that the human being is much more complex than a mental being, though he is supremely mental, for he is its new creation in the world. He represents the last possibility of Nature, and in that, naturally his mental life has taken immense proportions, because he has the pride of being the only one upon earth to have it. He does not always make a good use of it, still it is like this. But it's not here that he will find the solution. He must go beyond. There we are.

Now, has someone else a question? No? No one? (*To a child*) Do you have a question?

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Mother, from the Stone Age to our times, if we see, man has made progress only in the mind, that is, in the scientific field, and why no progress in his...

You think so? Who has told you this?

It is here (in the text), it is said that we are almost in the Stone Age...

Ah, ah! It's he (*pointing to Pavitra*) who has said it. (*Laughter*)

Perhaps man had to prepare his mind first. In the Stone Age his mind was a little rustic, eh! there wasn't much stuff there. He had to develop it before being able to go beyond it. It has taken a long time but we have all the same come to something.

It is quite obvious that from the purely mental point of view, of the physical mind, well, we have come a long way since the Stone Age. It is said that we haven't made much progress because there's something else which has not been much developed; just because we were much too occupied in playing with a new instrument; yes, it is so interesting to have a new game here! People played with it, they tried all the ways of using it. From the practical point of view their games were above all applications of this, yes! Even the atomic bomb is yet a way of playing; it is a little macabre but still it is a game. It is not with a clear, definite vision, a plan, an organisation to make the whole thing advance towards the goal, the true goal. It is not that. It was absolutely... it is still... like children in a recreation courtyard: they invent, they search, play, find out, they jostle one another, fight, make up, quarrel, discover, destroy, construct. But there is a plan behind; there was a plan; there is still a plan; there is more and more of a plan. And perhaps all this that is playing on the surface, despite all, is leading to something which will come forth one day; perhaps if we speak of it now and think so much about it, it is perhaps... at a given moment surely it must come about, eh! It may take place slowly, by stages, but still there is

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a moment when it begins to take place. So it is perhaps that we have reached this moment.

However, we must not anticipate, we shall speak about it next time.

There, then, is that all?

No more questions? Nothing? (*To a child*) You have nothing to say this evening?...

No? Good. Then, *au revoir*, my children.

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Mother reads *The Great Secret: The Unknown Man*.

When is it going to happen, eh? There. That's the question I was waiting for.

(*To a child*) What did you want to ask?

What you said just now.

You see, I know how to read thoughts.

And so, if I were to say that it depends upon you? It is not altogether true, but still there is something true in it.

I think that this will happen the moment there is a sufficiently large number of consciousnesses which feel absolutely that it cannot be otherwise. Now, most people, the immense majority among you have to make an effort to imagine what it will be, and at best, speculate upon it and perhaps hope that this transformation will make things more pleasing, more pleasant — something like that. But your consciousness is so attached to what is, that it even finds it difficult to imagine that things can be otherwise. And until what must be becomes for a sufficiently big group of consciousnesses an inevitable necessity, and all that has been and all that still is at present appears like an absurdity which cannot last... it is at that moment that this can take place, not before.

There remains a problem, namely, whether it is something which can take place and will take place individually before occurring collectively. It is probable. But no individual realisation can be complete nor even approach this perfection if it is not in harmony with at least a group of consciousnesses representative of a new world. In spite of everything there is so great an interdependence of the individual and the collectivity,

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that the individual realisation, despite all, is limited, impoverished by the irresponsible atmosphere — if I may say so — of what surrounds it. And it is certain that the entire terrestrial life has to follow a certain curve of progress, so that a new world and a new consciousness can manifest. And that is why I said at the beginning that it depends at least partially on you.

Have you ever tried to picture what this new consciousness could be and what a new race could be like, and finally what a new world could be like?

By analogy, it is quite obvious that the arrival of man upon earth has changed the earth-condition. I cannot say that from a certain point of view this was for the greatest good of all, because there are many who have suffered terribly from it, and here it is obvious that the complications the human being has brought into life have not always been very favourable either for him or for others. But from a certain point of view this has brought about a considerable progress, even in the lower species: man meddled with the life of animals, he meddled with the life of plants, he meddled with the life of metals, of minerals; as I said, it was not always for the greatest joy of those he dealt with, but still it certainly changed their conditions of life considerably. Well, in the same way, it is probable that the supramental being, whatever it might be, will considerably change the life of the earth. In our heart and our thought we hope that all the evils the earth suffers from will be at least ameliorated if not cured, and that the general conditions will be more harmonious, and in any case more tolerable. This may happen, because it was the very nature of the mental consciousness which incarnated in man, who acted for his own satisfaction, with his own development in view and without much consideration for the consequences of his actions. Perhaps the Supermind will act more harmoniously. In any case we hope so. That is how we conceive of it.

But I am asking you, in turn, a question: have you thought of it? Have you thought of what it could be?

(To a child) You, have you thought about it? *(To another*

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child) You? No? You have thought about it? Then tell me what you have thought. Naturally I am not asking you to repeat to me what you have read in Sri Aurobindo's books, because that's not what is in question: you must endeavour to imagine and live something yourself.

Can't you tell me? Nor you? You can't tell me?

Mother, because of our imperfection we have to do something. But when the supramental race descends, it will be perfect; then what will be there to do?

Perfect! Perfect in comparison with us but not in comparison with what will come later. The world is in perpetual movement and perpetual progression, and it is very obvious that each time a new consciousness has manifested upon earth, one has felt that it would be... perhaps not a definitive realisation but in any case a considerable progress. And it is also very obvious that for... say, the consciousness of an elephant or a dog... human capacities are something absolutely marvellous. To the extent they are able to understand it, imagine it, sense it — dogs sense them — human faculties are for them something divine. And it is because we, indeed, have come to a stage where we perceive something beyond (that's what I have said in there, haven't I?), it's because of this that we are not satisfied with all that we do; it's because of this that there is the feeling that whatever we may do, there is something which escapes us — that the real thing escapes us, that we are turning round it but don't touch it. It's because we are ready for this something. Otherwise, if we did not understand that, we would be absolutely satisfied with what we can do and there would simply remain the effort to do it better and better. It is the beginning of a new expression. This need, for instance, of something which would be more essentially true; something which would be... on which one could count, which does not collapse when one leans upon it, something which gives us a lasting, permanent support; this need of eternity which we

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have in ourselves, this need of an absolute, of an absolute truth, an absolute good, an absolute beauty — this indeed awakens at the moment one is ready to receive a new consciousness.

It is certain that for a very long time, perhaps from the very beginning (not the beginning from the evolutionary standpoint, because there were periods of intermediate beings who were much nearer the animal than the true man), when this human form was developed enough and ready to receive something from above, when the first beings of the higher worlds incarnated in human forms, from that time there were always individuals who carried in themselves this need for eternity and the absolute. But it was something individual. And it is only gradually and very progressively, through consecutive periods of light and darkness, that in the whole of humanity something has awakened to the need of a higher good.

It is quite obvious that now, through all the swirlings and all the stupidities, there is an awakening need, almost a kind of sensation of what this could and should be — which means that the time is near. For a very long time it has been said, “It will be, it will be”, and it was promised... thousands and thousands of years ago they had already begun to promise that there would be a new consciousness, a new world, something divine which would manifest upon earth, but it was said, “It will be, it will be”, like that; they spoke of ages, eons, thousands and millions of years. They did not have this sensation which we now have, that it must come, that it is very close. Of course human life is very short and there is a tendency to wish to shorten the distances so that they may be in proportion to the dimensions; but in spite of all, there will come a moment when it happens... there will be a time when it happens, there will be a time when the movement swings over into a new reality... There was a time when the mental being could manifest upon earth. The starting point might have been poor, very incomplete, very partial, but all the same there was a starting point. Why can't it be now?... That's all.

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Perhaps if those who from the beginning have proclaimed that it would be, those very people say, "It is going to be...", after all, perhaps they are the best informed. I am considering how from the beginning of the earth's history (we shall not go farther back to the antecedents, you know, for we have already enough to do with the earth), from the beginning of the earth's history, in one form or another, under one name or another, Sri Aurobindo has always presided over the great terrestrial transformations; and so when he tells you, "Well, this is the right time", perhaps he knows. That's all that I can say.

So, if it is the right time, this is how the problem is put: there are people who are ready or will become ready, and these precisely will be the first to start on the new path. There are others who, perhaps, will become aware of it too late, who will have missed the opportunity; I think there will be many of this kind. But in any case, my point of view is this: even if there should be only half a chance, it would be worth the trouble of trying. For after all... I don't know... I told you just now, there is a moment when life such as it is, the human consciousness such as it is, seems something absolutely impossible to bear, it creates a kind of disgust, repugnance; one says, "No, it is not that, it is not that; it can't be that, it can't continue." Well, when one comes to this, there is only to throw in one's *all* — all one's effort, all one's strength, all one's life, all one's being — into this chance, if you like, or this exceptional opportunity that is given to cross over to the other side. What a relief to set foot on the new path, that which will lead you elsewhere! This is worth the trouble of casting behind much luggage, of getting rid of many things in order to be able to take that leap. That's how I see the problem.

In fact it is the sublimest of adventures, and if one has in him in the slightest the true spirit of adventure, it is worth risking all for all. But those who are afraid, who wonder, "Am I not going to let go the substance for the shadow?" according to the most banal proverb one can imagine, those who tell themselves, "Bah! After all it is better to profit by what one has than to risk losing

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everything, we don't know what is going to happen tomorrow, let us take precautions"... unfortunately this is very widespread, extremely widespread... well, about those who are in this state of mind, I can assure you of one thing: that even when the thing occurs before their very nose, they will not perceive it. They will say, "It is good, in this way I won't regret anything." It is possible. But perhaps later they will; this we do not know.

In any case what *I* call being sincere is this: if one thinks that this new realisation is the only thing which is truly worth being lived; if what is, is intolerable — not only for oneself, perhaps not so much for oneself... but still, if one is not absolutely selfish and mean, one feels that, truly, it has lasted long enough, that one has had enough of it, that it must change — well, when one feels like that, one takes everything, all that one is, all that one can, all that one has, and one throws oneself into it completely without ever looking behind, and come what may! I indeed feel that it would be preferable even to plunge into an abyss in this way than to be on the shore, trembling and wondering, "What will happen to me tomorrow if I take this rather rash step?" There we are.

It is preferable to buck up a little, as they say familiarly, and chance it! That's my opinion.

Now if you have something else to say, say it. (*To a child*)
And you, are you among the satisfied ones or among those who want this to change? I won't ask indiscreet questions!

(*Silence*)

Mother, what you have just said implies that the transformation of consciousness and that of life go together, doesn't it? Because in the text it is said: One must first transform the consciousness, then life...

To tell you the truth, not very much is asked for life at the moment: just a little — what I call little things. It is obvious,

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yes... you see, if you were asked not to live completely like an animal... not completely, because not to live even partially is at present difficult... however, not to live completely like an animal, that is a change in life. But it doesn't go further than that. You are not asked to live like ethereal spirits; for the moment we go gently, progressively.

But this animality...

No, excuse me! You mean that one thinks that he can bring along his animality into the new consciousness?

No, but until it is ready...

But things are not as sharply cut as that. For the animality to disappear completely, the form must be totally transformed. As long as the body-functioning, for instance, remains what it is, well, we shall participate more than enough in the animality, you see; and this indeed can only disappear when, ah well, we no longer have a heart, lungs, a stomach, and all the rest. We say that this will come much later.

In fact, the only thing which is very important for the moment is the change of consciousness. And don't think that this is so easy. If you observe yourself attentively, you will perceive that you think, feel, experience and construct like a human animal, that is, like an infrarational being who is three-fourths subconscious, through almost the whole of your day. It is possible that at certain moments you escape from this; but you still need an effort to escape from it. It may happen spontaneously, as by grace, at certain moments; but most of the time you have to make an effort to be able to catch something which is not purely this. At any time whatever of your day, if you take just a small step backwards and observe yourself, you will catch yourself, you will see that. When is it that... suddenly, you see, if I said all of a sudden, here, now, "Look at yourself!" like that, without

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warning you beforehand, what was it, there in the field of your consciousness? If you catch that, you will see; certainly at least ninety-nine times out of a hundred, it is the animal that's there; an animal which is a little improved, you know, not altogether a dog, not altogether a monkey, but still not very far from that.

There are many things which men have transformed into marvellous virtues, which I have found in animals as spontaneous movements — and they at least have the advantage of not being proud and not having any vanity. They did things spontaneously which, surely, were very remarkable — very remarkable in devotion, abnegation, foresight, educative sense. They did them spontaneously and without writing books on them and boasting about them as something marvellous. Therefore much is needed to come out of the animal, much more than one would think.

Mother, you were saying just now that it is very close...

What, very close? The event?

Yes. Otherwise we wouldn't be speaking about it. If it had to happen in some thousands of years, it is obvious that we wouldn't need to be concerned with it except as a far-off dream.

So this means that there is at least a fair minority that has changed?

Ah, that!... It is possible; but perhaps not many — I mean perhaps not many people.

There are beings who could look at themselves at any moment whatever, and who wouldn't find the animal. There are not many of them. One doesn't speak of things unless one knows them — in any case, one should not.

(To a child) So you have something to say?

Mother, what is the true reality of the universe?

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(Long silence)

If you like, in a paradoxical form I would say: What the universe will become.

I could also say: Its starting point and its culmination.

And also: What it is from all eternity.

Now, with all this, make up something.

Mother, you have said in the text: "An intervention will come and prolong our life..." In that case our life will be prolonged until we could see the coming?

I haven't read that to you, and it is purposely that I didn't read it to you. When one writes a drama for a public, one is obliged to say certain things which make it something accessible.

But it is true, isn't it?

Whether it is the truth? Yes... That's all.

Mother, the appearance of mental man was gradual, wasn't it, from the animal to man?

That... There was all the same a time when it became a man, isn't that so? I told you that, from the standpoint of evolution it seems like that. I indeed am not very well up in all this, you see, I can't tell you how it happened, at least not what science thinks it knows about what happened. I can tell you only what I know.

Well, there was a time when what we call the human form, that is, with human capacities, was ready enough for a being with mental consciousness, entirely conscious, to be able to incarnate in it — and this indeed was truly the first man. Now, historically at what time this happened I can't tell you; but it was a very long time ago. Sometime ago I came across some numbers, which seemed to me to be absolutely reasonable and accurate —

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but that was extremely long ago. And for a *very* long time it was like... a kind of vast and quiet state, as when the sea has reached high-tide and spreads out and is calm. It remained calm like that for a very, very, very, very long time; and it was only after very long that what we call human activity and human civilisation began to take place, and for this, even from the beginning of this till today... we have figures, haven't we, approximately...? (*turning to Pavitra*) Pavitra, do you know them?

(Pavitra) *I don't remember them now.*

There are figures, but they are quite enormous. And this is only the period that can be called historic — though it isn't so, ordinarily reckoning — but still, they have discovered signs, documents, indications, something which can give you an idea of the time. Well, all this happened only very long after the first mental consciousness incarnated in a human form, which had become sufficiently human, you see, to become a man; and probably before this form was produced there must have been numerous trials of Nature which spread out, perhaps over thousands and thousands and millions of years. I don't know. But there was a time, as I said, when this mental consciousness was able to come and take possession of a form. After this, as I also told you, for very, very long... in order that this form could adapt itself and perfect itself sufficiently to express this consciousness completely, a very, very, very long time was necessary — that is understood. Well, it is more than probable that (not more than probable, certain), that it will happen again in the same way.

There will come a time when a human consciousness is in the required state for a supramental consciousness to be able to enter this human consciousness and manifest.

But it is possible that before this becomes a new race like the human race, it may take very, very long. And it will be done progressively. But as I say, there is one thing: when it happens,

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it will happen. It does not happen, does not stretch out like a rubber band, you see; there is a time when it happens, when the descent takes place, the fusion occurs, the identification comes about. It can be done in a flash. There is a moment when it occurs. Later it may take very, very, very long; one must not hope that overnight one is going to see supermen springing up here and there. No, it won't be like that. Only, those who will have done what I have said, those who will have thrown themselves in entirely, risked all for all, those will know it. But they will be the only ones to know; they will know when it takes place.

The others will not be able even to see?

The others? They will not even be aware of it! They will continue their stupid life, without knowing what has happened.

But all the same, they will be able to see this superman before them. (Laughter)

Sweet Mother, what will be the attitude of the superman towards man?

What is the attitude of man towards the animal? No, let us hope that he is a little more kind! *(Laughter)*

But you must not delude yourself. For the supramental consciousness man is truly stupid. Yes, even with all his perfections, all his realisations, all that, even with all his accomplishments, well, he seems *terribly* stupid. Only, that's no reason for ill-treating him. But I don't think that the superman will ill-treat anyone, just because he will have a consciousness which will be able to pass behind appearances. Let us hope that he will be quite kind.

There we are. That's all?

I think it is finished, unless someone has a *very* important question to ask me. Pavitra?

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(Pavitra) *What will be man's attitude towards the superman?*

Ah! (*Laughter*) Let us hope that it is not the same attitude as the one which man has towards all his gods, because he has rather ill-treated them. His prophets and his gods, he has put them upon the cross, he has stoned them, has burnt them alive — indeed, man has behaved rather badly with all those who came to preach a new life to him. Let us hope that man becomes a little more reasonable... Now he would put them in prison.

But man has also installed them in temples!

No, not the being itself: the image he has manufactured after the event, and of which he has made a... a political action. Excuse me, it is god made in man's image who has been put in temples and adored, for purely political reasons. But those who were in relation with... those who manifested in themselves the Divine Reality, they have been very badly received, always. History is there to prove it. Now, you see, men don't throw stones any more, except at the poor Negroes sometimes in America; they don't burn people alive any more, it is no longer the fashion — but they imprison, that happens. And in fact (I have said this already several times), what saves those who are not altogether men, is that today the world is in such a state of ignorance that people don't even believe any more in the reality of their power. But certainly if the governments believed in the reality of their power, they would have a bad time of it...

But let us hope that... I should say then as I said for men... that the superman will be quite kind. Well, let us hope for the superman that he will know how to defend himself, that he will have some means of defence, not too visible but sufficient.

But Mother, if man cannot see him, he doesn't need to defend himself, does he?

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No. It is perhaps his greatest means — the gift of invisibility.
(*Mother laughs*)

You see, you always ask: “But why doesn’t he become a being manifesting supramental forces? Why doesn’t he suddenly become luminous physically? Then we would be able to know that it is he.” Well, you would see what happens to the poor fellow! And it would be only a small thing; to be a little luminous is only a very small thing!

That’s enough for today.

19 October 1955

Mother reads from Sri Aurobindo's *The Synthesis of Yoga*,
"The Four Aids".

Sweet Mother, here: "Last comes the instrumentality of Time, Kāla; for in all things there is a cycle of their action and a period of the divine movement...." What is this period of the divine movement?

For each thing it is different.

For each activity, each realisation, each movement, there is a definite period of time, which differs. There are countless periods of time which are entangled; but each thing is regulated by a kind of rhythm which is this thing's own rhythm.

You see, for the facility of their outer existence, men have divided time more or less arbitrarily into years, months, weeks, days, hours, minutes, seconds, etc.; it is a rhythm that's more or less arbitrary, because it has been created by man, but it has in itself a certain reality, for it corresponds to universal movements... as far as possible. And that is why, by the way, we celebrate the birthday, for example: because there is a certain rhythm in each one's existence which is established by this regular return of circumstances analogous to those in which he was born.

And all movements — when you observe them, you become aware that they have a certain rhythm — the movements of inner consciousness, for example, not only from the point of view of understanding but that of personal reactions, of the ups and downs in progress; of a fairly regular periodic return, at once of advancing and recoiling, of difficulties and of helps. But if each person is attentive he realises that his own rhythm is absolutely particular to him; it is not the same rhythm as his neighbour's.

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But even as the seasons follow a certain rhythm, regular enough on the whole, so the individual life has its seasons. And when one studies oneself attentively, one finds out that there are even certain repetitions of analogous circumstances at regular intervals. Even, very sensitive people become aware that there are certain days of the week or certain hours of the day when they can do things more easily. Some of them have particular difficulties on particular days and at particular hours; some on the contrary have better inspirations at particular moments — but every one has to find this out in himself by observation. Naturally it is far from being absolute, it is not strict, and if it is troublesome, it can be eliminated very easily simply by a little effort of resolute will. But if it helps, one can make use of it.

And all this, each thing having its own rhythm, well, it makes an extremely complicated criss-crossing of rhythms, which results in what we see: something which seems to have none — because it is too complicated, it is too complex.

How can we make use of it, Sweet Mother?

Well, if... let us say, you know... we are speaking of yoga... if you observe in yourself a certain repetition of conditions, for example, that at a particular hour, a certain time of day, in certain circumstances, it is easier for you to concentrate or meditate, well, you make use of that by doing it at that time.

Naturally, you must not become its slave; one can use it but it must not become a necessity so that if the hour has gone by one can't meditate then. But if it is a good help, one uses the help; it's all a matter of observation.

If you study yourself you can become aware that in the year certain periods come due not only to personal conditions but more general ones — conditions of Nature in general. There are times when you meet more difficulties in the sadhana; there are times, on the contrary, when you feel in yourself a greater push for the growth of knowledge and consciousness. This helps you

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in the sense that, if at a given time you find yourself in the midst of special difficulties or something that seems like a stoppage, instead of lamenting you tell yourself, “Why, it’s the usual time; it’s because we are at this particular time of the year.” And you wait with patience for the time to pass; or do what you can, but without being discouraged and saying, “Ah, look, I am not getting on, I am not making any progress.” It helps you to be reasonable.

And naturally one can take one more step and take precautions in such a way... inner precautions to be independent of these external influences. But this comes much later, when one begins to be the conscious master of one’s sadhana. That comes afterwards.

Is that all?

Nothing over there?

Mother, what is the lotus of knowledge and perfection?

What do you want to know? What it is?

You have heard of the different centres, haven’t you? And these centres are usually represented as lotuses which at first are closed and which gradually open as one progresses spiritually.

The lotus of knowledge is the thousand-petalled lotus. (*To Nolini*) Is that it?... Yes, so it’s the one in the head; it’s the last in order, before those which are beyond the human body.

... of perfection?

It is the lotus of knowledge, the thousand-petalled lotus which blooms; as it is the highest... perfection... it depends on what perfection!...

“The lotus of the eternal knowledge and the eternal perfection is a bud closed and folded up within us.”

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That is it. There is one above — above the head, but usually it's not mentioned.

And in the usual order it's the last to open. I say "in the usual order" because there are cases where it is otherwise: those below open after the upper ones. But still in the usual order, when we speak of the rising of the Kundalini, you see, from the centre of energy, well, it is as it goes on rising that it awakens the corresponding centres; and that centre is the one it reaches last. And as a matter of fact, when this happens, when it reaches that, it is the sign of perfection in the rising of the energy.

(Silence)

I think I have spoken to you about these centres already, and to what each one of them corresponds.

That's all?

Sweet Mother, here it is written: "Nothing can be taught to the mind which is not already concealed as potential knowledge..." Then, does this mean that he who has no hidden knowledge cannot have...

No. It's not altogether like that.

What it means is that all things are potentially contained in the substance constituting man. Only, the organisation is different according to individuals; and the degree of awakening, of the capacity to respond is also different.

And this is what makes the difference between the possibilities of individuals. But in fact, essentially each being contains in itself all the universal potentialities. To what extent he is capable of developing them... it's a kind of hierarchy which is established among individuals and their degree of development. But, essentially, in each one there is the Divine Presence and therefore the Supreme Consciousness. Only, for some to be able to become conscious of it, it will take thousands and thousands

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of years, and others have by inner and outer circumstances come to the moment when they are ready to become aware of it. It is rather a hierarchy in realisation than one in potentialities.

Now in addition to this, some beings manifest something other than a purely human consciousness — but this is something additional; these are exceptional cases. But usually it's like this: the substance itself contains all the possibilities.

It is as Sri Aurobindo says further on: If the Divine were not in you, never would you be able to know the Divine.

That's what it means.

Sweet Mother, here he has said "the teguments of the soul". What are the teguments of the soul?

Oh! It is compared with... it is still compared with a plant; and it is like something which keeps the bud of the flower closed, which ties up, so to say, the bud or flower, ties it up, closes it; these are the things which have to be broken so that the flower can blossom. So it follows the comparison with the lotus, you see: what shuts in the soul, prevents it from being active and manifesting itself; that's what has to be broken, like links, like ties, things which hold it in; this must be broken, more or less slowly, so that the soul may blossom like a flower. These attachments... he explains what they are, you see... I think it's here that he says that they are... (*Mother reads*) "obstacles to the inevitable efflorescence."

He also says: "... confined by attachment to finite appearances." So it is the same thing, you see; it's all that attaches you to the ordinary external consciousness, all that ties you to the ordinary life — that's what shuts up the soul, here, like this, squeezed up closely.

This must be broken. There, then.

Something, over there?

Mother, here it is said: "There is first the knowledge of

the truths, principles...” *First the Shastra must be known; but to know the Shastra it is said: “The supreme Shastra of the integral Yoga is the eternal Veda secret in the heart...”* So to know the Shastra, first a long process of Yoga is necessary. (Laughter)

Yes. According to the usual formula, it is like that. It can't be learnt overnight, no, nobody believes that, I suppose! Only Sri Aurobindo has made... I don't know, we haven't yet read it today... he has made a distinction; he says... no, a little further on he speaks of — we shall see this next time — he speaks of the Guru... no... “the more powerful word of the living Guru”; it comes later.

That is, if it is necessary to prepare oneself by studying books, it is a preparation that takes quite a long time. But if it happens that one can receive a direct teaching, and in all circumstances, then it goes much more quickly. When you have nobody to guide you, and have to find your way by the help of books, when you don't even have anyone to tell you, “Read that book rather than this one”, when you have to find out everything by yourself, it takes time. Many years.

You see, it makes a difference — people don't realise it — it makes a considerable difference to be able to ask the question of someone who has realised the thing, that is, one who has had all the experiences and has reached the end and has the knowledge of the thing. You can ask him: “Is this good? Is this useful, is this harmful?” Then in one minute you have the answer: “Yes, no, do this, read that, don't do that.” And it is so convenient.

But when you are all alone — usually not amidst very favourable surroundings, or in any case where people understand nothing of this, don't think about it — if they are not hostile — you have to find out everything by yourself; you have nobody to tell you, “Well, read this book, it is better, it is truer than that one.” You have to read a huge number of things, be

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able to compare them in your own thought, compare the effect they have on you, how far they help you or don't.

Naturally, people who are predestined are guided by the inner Guide. It happens that they come across the book they should read or meet the person who can give them a useful indication; but this is... After some time they become aware that there was a consciousness there; they did not know very well either where it came from or what it was, or who organised their life, who organised the circumstances of their life — and who helped them at every step to find just the thing which would lead them farther. But it is... it is not very frequent; rather, it is rare. These people are predestined.

Otherwise it is difficult; it takes time, much time. And yet it is just the beginning, you see; it is to find the truths on which to base one's yoga. It is not yoga; it is the general principles on which one is going to construct one's yoga.

Obviously, those who are particularly interested can find something. It goes without saying that for those who are in India, it is extremely easy, extremely easy; there is a living tradition; whoever wants to do yoga will always find someone to give him information. And even the most ignorant and uneducated have a vague idea of what ought to be done or of what can help them.

But if you are transplanted to the West, well, you will see how difficult it is, with a whole world organised not only "not for", not only indifferent, but almost totally against, which deliberately refuses to know this Reality, because it is troublesome; so when this happens within you, when the need manifests, you truly don't know where to turn to find a way out.

Now it is a little better. But fifty years ago it was not too good — fifty, sixty years ago, it was difficult. Now they have made some progress; there is a little more light there, everywhere.

That's all?

Mother, here it is said: "He who chooses the Infinite has been chosen by the Infinite."

It is a magnificent sentence!

And it is absolutely true. There is in *Thoughts and Glimpses* also a sentence like this where I think he uses the word “God” instead of the Infinite. But the idea is the same — that it is God who has chosen you, the Divine who has chosen you. And that is why you run after Him!

And this is what gives — that’s what he says, doesn’t he? — this is what gives that kind of confidence, of certitude, precisely, that one is predestined; and if one is predestined, even if there are mountains of difficulties, what can that matter since one is sure to succeed! This gives you an indomitable courage to face all difficulties and a patience that stands all trials: you are sure to succeed.

And it’s a fact — in fact, it is like that: the moment you thought about it, well, you thought about it because someone thought about you; you chose because you were chosen. And once you have been chosen, you are sure of the thing. Therefore, doubts, hesitations, depressions, uncertainties, all this is quite simply a waste of time and energy; it is of no use at all.

From the moment one has felt just once within himself: “Ah! *This* is the truth for me”, it is finished; it is finished, it is settled. Even if you spend years cutting your way through the virgin forest, it’s of no importance — it is finished, it is settled.

That is why I told you one day, “After all, you all are here because you have wanted it somewhere; and if you wanted it somewhere, it means that the Divine wanted it thus in you.”

So there are some who follow a very straight path and arrive very quickly; there are others who love labyrinths, it takes longer. But the end is there, the goal is there. I know by experience that there isn’t one being who, were it only once in his life, has had a great urge towards... it doesn’t matter what he calls it — let us say the Divine for facility of speech, who is not sure to arrive; even if he turns his back on Him at a certain time, it’s of no importance — he is sure to arrive. He will have to struggle more or less, will have more or less difficulty, but he is sure to succeed

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one day. It's a soul that has been chosen, it has become conscious because its hour has come — once the hour has come, well, the result will follow more or less quickly. You can do this in a few months; you can do it in some years; you can do it in some lives — but you will do it.

And what is remarkable is that this freedom of choice is left to you and that, if you decide within yourself that you will do it in this lifetime, you will do it. And I am not speaking here of a permanent and continuous decision because then you can arrive in twelve months. No, I mean: if you have suddenly been seized by this, "I want this", even once, in a flash, the seal is put, there, like that.

There we are.

That's not a reason for wasting time on the way; that's not a reason for just following all the meanderings of the labyrinth and arriving with... with considerable rubbish when you are at the end. No. But, in any case it is a reason for never despairing, whatever the difficulties may be.

I am of the opinion that when there is something to do, it is better to do it as quickly as possible. But still, there are people who like to waste their time. Perhaps they need to turn and turn and turn and return and make lots of windings before reaching the place they have to. But that's a question of choice. Unfortunately, those who are in this habit of turning and returning and turning aside and making all kinds of useless meanderings, are the ones who complain most; they moan, and they are the workers of their own misery!

If one decided to go quite straight upon his path, whatever the cost — knowing how to bear a few difficulties, facing discomforts, without weakness, you see — well, one would avoid much trouble. But some people go only if they are taken by the scruff of the neck and dragged with a terrible force. Then they shout that they are violently forced.

However, it's they who wanted it.

There, then.

26 October 1955

Mother reads from *The Synthesis of Yoga*, "The Four Aids".

No questions!

There aren't any questions here, it is clear as crystal.

Here it is written: "The word within may be the utterance of the inmost soul in us which is always open to the Divine or it may be the word of the secret and universal Teacher..." Why are they different, the Divine and the universal Teacher?

The universal Teacher is only an aspect of the Divine, you see. The Divine contains all the possible activities; the Teacher is only one activity, the One who teaches. Sri Aurobindo means that either it is a direct contact with the Divine or a contact with an aspect of the Divine, the One who teaches, the divine Guru. But the Divine is not only a Guru.

That's all?

Sweet Mother, here: "In some cases this representative word is only taken as a sort of excuse for the inner power to awaken and manifest..." Then in this case is it the individual's aspiration or the power of the Word?

This depends a great deal on the degree of the sadhak's development, you see. If he is developed and conscious enough to be in direct contact with the spiritual Force which is working behind the words, then the word is only an excuse. But if for him it must pass through his mental understanding in order to have its effect, then the word takes on a much greater importance. It depends on the degree of development.

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If one is capable of receiving directly, then one opens a book for instance, finds a sentence and has an illumination; because it was just the word one was waiting for in order to put himself into contact with the Force he needed to take the next step.

Otherwise one must take a book, study it, read it sentence by sentence, word by word, and then reflect and then understand it and then assimilate it and then, later, very slowly, after the assimilation and understanding, it begins to have an effect on the character and one makes some progress.

In one case it is a direct contact, you see, and just one sentence, one word... one reads a word, reads a sentence, and has an illumination. And then one receives all the Force that one needs. The other is the path of the learned man, the scholar, who is an intellectual being and needs to learn, reflect, assimilate, reason about all he has learnt, in order to make progress. It is long, it is laborious.

That's all?

Sweet Mother, there's a flower you have named "The Creative Word".

Yes.

What does that mean?

It is the word which creates.

There are all kinds of old traditions, old Hindu traditions, old Chaldean traditions in which the Divine, in the form of the Creator, that is, in His aspect as Creator, pronounces a word which has the power to create. So it is this... And it is the origin of the mantra. The mantra is the spoken word which has a creative power. An invocation is made and there is an answer to the invocation; or one makes a prayer and the prayer is granted. This is the Word, the Word which, in its sound... it is not only

the idea, it is in the sound that there's a power of creation. It is the origin, you see, of the mantra.

In Indian mythology the creator God is Brahma, and I think that it was precisely his power which has been symbolised by this flower, "The Creative Word". And when one is in contact with it, the words spoken have a power of evocation or creation or formation or transformation; the words... sound always has a power; it has much more power than men think. It may be a good power and it may be a bad power. It creates vibrations which have an undeniable effect. It is not so much the idea as the sound; the idea too has its own power, but in its own domain — whereas the sound has a power in the material world.

I think I have explained this to you once; I told you, for example, that words spoken casually, usually without any reflection and without attaching any importance to them, can be used to do something very good. I think I spoke to you about "Bonjour", "Good Day", didn't I? When people meet and say "Bonjour", they do so mechanically and without thinking. But if you put a will into it, an aspiration to indeed wish someone a good day, well, there is a way of saying "Good Day" which is very effective, much more effective than if simply meeting someone you thought: "Ah! I hope he has a good day", without saying anything. If with this hope in your thought you say to him in a certain way, "Good Day", you make it more concrete and more effective.

It's the same thing, by the way, with curses, or when one gets angry and says bad things to people. This can do them as much harm — more harm sometimes — than if you were to give them a slap. With very sensitive people it can put their stomach out of order or give them palpitation, because you put into it an evil force which has a power of destruction.

It is not at all ineffective to speak. Naturally it depends a great deal on each one's inner power. People who have no strength and no consciousness can't do very much — unless they employ material means. But to the extent that you are strong,

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especially when you have a powerful vital, you must have a great control on what you say, otherwise you can do much harm. Without wanting to, without knowing it; through ignorance.

Anything? No? Nothing?

Another question?... Everything's over?

About sound, Mother, different languages have different expressions of sounds; then on what does the power of a language depend?

But when one is perceptive, sensitive enough, if someone speaks a language which one does not know at all, but he puts into it a very precise intention, the same effects are felt.

If someone wishes you a good day or good health in a tongue that you don't know at all and which has no relation with yours, you can feel the effect without understanding the words. Or else if someone says something violent to you or curses you in a language you are totally ignorant of, you can very well receive the vibrations. This does not depend on the understood word. In each language there are sounds which are expressive; it is not only one language that is expressive. And there are several ways of expressing the same thing. There are countless ways of expressing the same thing.

I remember having heard learned people discussing things, and they thought themselves very wise — and discussed with an imperturbable seriousness to find out in which language God had said: "Let there be Light."

Some of them said that it must have been in Sanskrit, others said that it must have been a still more ancient tongue, others said that it must have been Syrian, and so on, you see; and nobody thought that perhaps it was not any language at all!

Does the Word also follow the evolution?

That means?...

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It means that what was studied before has now become mediocre.

What Word?

What had been conceived by the scholars in the written Shastras; that is, what is written here...

Of the old traditions?... Yes. But Sri Aurobindo also says that there is no reason for it not to change, for things not to be added, changed. He says... he himself answers your question.

It is very good to keep the memory of the past if it helps you, but it should not prevent you from going forward. And the teaching which was good at one time is no longer so at another, that's absolutely certain.

What I am asking is: Does it too follow the evolution?

What evolution?

That is, what was necessary formerly is no longer sufficient now.

Logically, one should always add.

But, usually, those who are attached to the past want to keep the past by itself, and the others who want to go forward want to reject everything and keep only what they have found. And so both of them make a common mistake... that is, of limiting themselves and making their consciousness narrow instead of widening it.

Is sound particular only to the physical world or is there sound in the other domains also?

There is sound there also.

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In the same way as here?

There certainly is a sound in all the manifested worlds, and when one has the appropriate organs one hears it.

There are sounds which belong to the highest regions, and in fact, the sound we have here gives the feeling of a noise in comparison with that sound.

For example, there are regions harmonious and musical in which one hears something which is the origin of the music we have here — but the sounds of material, physical music seem absolutely barbaric in comparison with that music! When one has heard that, even the most perfect instrument is inadequate. All constructed instruments, among which the violin certainly has the purest sound, are very much inferior in their expression to the music of this world of harmonies.

The human voice when absolutely pure is of all instruments the one which expresses it best; but it is still... it has a sound which seems so harsh, so gross compared with that. When one has been in that region, one truly knows what music is. And it has so perfect a clarity that at the same time as the sound one has the full understanding of what is said. That is, one has the principle of the idea, without words, simply with the sound and all the inflexions of the... one can't call it sensations, nor feelings... what seems to be closest would be some kind of soul-states or states of consciousness. All these inflexions are clearly perceptible through the nuances of the sound. And certainly, those who were great musicians, geniuses from the point of view of music, must have been more or less consciously in contact with that. The physical world as we have it today is an absolutely gross world; it looks like a caricature.

It's the same thing with painting: all the pictures we know today look like daubings when one has seen the domain of form and colour, the source of the things expressed through the painting.

And fundamentally it is the same thing from the point of

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view of ideas. If one enters into contact with the domain of pure ideas beyond words, all words are such limitations, restrictions... it becomes a kind of caricature. The intensity of life contained in the idea is untranslatable. One can receive it if one is capable of entering consciously this domain. One can transmit it to a certain extent if one is master of its vibrations and can let them pass and emanate from him. But all that one says or all that one writes is truly a caricature.

Is that enough?

Or other questions still?

Mother, today is Victory Day (Durga Puja). It is said that every year on this day you win some victory.

But in order to have the right to know it, you must have at least some faint experience of it.

What victory has been won today?

Do you know it, you, eh?

No? You haven't had any experience of this kind?

Has anyone had an experience?

The conquest of desires.

What? You no longer have any desires, you? It is finished? I congratulate you! (*Laughter*)

(*Silence*)

Even following the tradition — which is only a local tradition, you know, not even a terrestrial tradition and still less a universal one — for how many thousands of years has she been winning a victory every year? And then she must begin once again always.

It must be something very difficult to destroy.

Is that all?

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Ah! We are going to make an experiment. We are going to meditate for ten minutes and during these ten minutes I shall put you in touch with what has happened; but I won't say a word to you. If there is someone who becomes aware of something, well, you will write it down on a sheet of paper later and I shall see it tomorrow.

There, now.

2 November 1955

Mother reads from *The Synthesis of Yoga*, “The Four Aids”.

Now then, your question?

“The process of Yoga is a turning of the human soul from the egoistic state of consciousness absorbed in the outward appearances...” I did not quite understand “the egoistic state of consciousness absorbed in the outward appearances...”

People are occupied with outward things. That means that the consciousness is turned towards external things — that is, all the things of life which one sees, knows, does — instead of being turned inwards in order to find the deeper truth, the divine Presence. This is the first movement. You are busy with all that you do, with the people around you, the things you use; and then with life: sleeping, eating, talking, working a little, having a little fun also; and then beginning over again: sleeping, eating, etc., etc., and then it begins again. And then what this one has said, what that one has done, what one ought to do, the lesson one ought to learn, the exercise one ought to prepare; and then again whether one is keeping well, whether one is feeling fit, etc. This is what one usually thinks about.

So the first movement — and it is not so easy — is to make all that pass to the background, and let one thing come inside and in front of the consciousness as *the* important thing: the discovery of the very purpose of existence and life, to learn what one is, why one lives, and what there is behind all this. This is the first step: to be interested more in the cause and goal than in the manifestation. That is, the first movement is a withdrawal of the consciousness from this total identification with outward

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and apparent things, and a kind of inward concentration on what one wants to discover, the Truth one wants to discover. This is the first movement.

Many people who are here forget one thing. They want to begin by the end. They think that they are ready to express in their life what they call the supramental Force or Consciousness, and they want to infuse this in their actions, their movements, their daily life. But the trouble is that they don't at all know what the supramental Force or Consciousness is and that first of all it is necessary to take the reverse path, the way of interiorisation and of withdrawal from life, in order to find within oneself this Truth which has to be expressed.

For as long as one has not found it, there is nothing to express. And by imagining that one is living an exceptional life, one lives only in the illusion of one's exceptional state. Therefore, at first not only must one find one's soul and the Divine who possesses it, but one must identify oneself with it. And then later, one may begin to come back to outward activities, and then transform them; because then one knows in what direction to turn them, into what to transform them.

One can't jump over this stage. One must first find one's soul, this is absolutely indispensable, and identify oneself with it. Later one can come to the transformation. Sri Aurobindo has written somewhere: "Our Yoga begins where the others end." Usually yoga leads precisely to this identification, this union with the Divine — that is why it is called "yoga". And when people reach this, well, they are at the end of their path and are satisfied. But Sri Aurobindo has written: we begin when they finish; you have found the Divine but instead of sitting down in contemplation and waiting for the Divine to take you out of your body which has become useless, on the contrary, with this consciousness you turn to the body and to life and begin the work of transformation — which is very hard labour. It's here that he compares it with cutting one's way through a virgin forest; because as nobody has done it before, one must make

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one's path where there was none. But to try to do this without having the indispensable directive of the union with the Divine within, within one's soul, is childishness. There.

I am speaking of yoga. I am not speaking of your life, of you all, you children here. That's different. You are here to develop yourselves. And when you are developed and have a precise thought of your own, a vision of your own, when you have enough knowledge to be able to choose freely what life you want to lead, then at that time you will take a decision.

But those who have already taken the decision, well for them it is first of all indispensable to find their soul and unite with their psychic being, and with the Divine who is within it. This is an absolutely indispensable beginning. One can't leap over that bridge; it is not possible. It can be done very quickly if you know how to use the help that's given to you; but it has to be done.

That's all?

Has anyone anything to ask?

Pavitra is looking for his soul!

Mother, here Sri Aurobindo says: "... the same problem has to be approached from a new starting-point."

Yes. That's exactly what I have just said. The problem remains the same...

The problem...

The problem is to find one's soul and unite with the Divine.

But, Mother, was it the same during the Vedic times also?

To find their soul and the Divine? Of course.

But they did not succeed?

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No, Sri Aurobindo says that in the Vedic age they tried to bring the spiritual life into the physical life, but he says that the means they employed, the paths they followed at that time are no longer any good now. Just imagine us before an altar making a *puja*!... It won't do now, it is not suitable.

Is their goal and ours the same?

I think so.

In any case, there were several ages in the earth's history in which there was given a kind of example, as a promise, of what would be there one day. These were called the golden ages. But certainly there were times in which a more or less complete representation of what had to be was as though lived out. Only it was just a demonstration, an example, which the world was completely unfit to take up as a realisation.

It was only to say: you see, this is how it will be, but not like this in all its details, like this in essence. And I think it did not last very long. In any case the memory of the thing is very limited, very localised and extremely short. There was an intensity, there was a great beauty in the expression, but it was something as though altogether independent of the whole of terrestrial life: an example... almost an example which is not to be followed, which cannot be followed, and which was always accompanied by a promise: "It will be like this"... a promise which has been repeated in very different words, of the New Earth or the Divine World or a New Creation, etc.

And I think it was perhaps at the beginning... not exactly the beginning of humanity but the beginning of the conscious evolution of humanity towards a realisation. We said last time that for a very long time humanity was very static and as though undergoing a preparation so slow, so invisible that it has taken perhaps millions of years. But these promises and examples were like starting-points, like the first push given to begin the evolution of the consciousness towards a higher realisation.

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I think the Vedic age was the latest. There were others before it, but of a very short duration.

Something over there?

A question?... Is that all?

Mother!

It's still that fellow asking questions!

What do you want to know?

When Vivekananda spoke of "the essential unity which would find its perfect state", did he think about it vaguely or...

Vivekananda, as far as I know, was not much for a material realisation. He belonged rather to the order of those who want to escape from life, cure themselves of this illness.

But at the end of his life he was sorry he had not succeeded.

I had once read something, I don't know where now, because it was in France, it was a translation in a book, perhaps one of those theosophical books which make translations of Indian things. I had read an incident recounted about Vivekananda who had been deeply shocked and had scolded a disciple because the latter had told him: "Oh! Look how magnificent is the sunset!" This had shocked him deeply. I remember I read this in France and it struck me; I still remember it because it seemed to me... it was his remark that seemed scandalous to me! He said, "Oh! Is it beautiful? If you appreciate the beauty of Nature you will never attain the Divine." I don't know, by the way, whether this was true or had been invented by the one who narrated it, I know nothing about it. I am only saying I had read it and that it struck me so much that many times when I look at the sunset or

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sunrise or a lovely effect of light I still recall this and tell myself, “Why! Such a dissociation... how strange that one can’t live the spiritual life if one admires Nature!”

So if it is true that he was like that, he was certainly at the other end of our programme. I am telling you I don’t know whether it is true, but still, I am giving it to you for what it’s worth. And all that I read about him was like this: that he had a deep contempt for all physical things, that he took them at the most as a means of self-development and liberation — nothing more.

*Mother, you said that the Vedic age was like a promise.
A promise to whom?*

To the Earth and men.

They left a kind of oral document of their experience. It was transmitted — and this was the promise.

They used an imaged language. Some people say that it was because they wanted it to be an initiation which would be understood only by the initiates. But it could also be an absolutely spontaneous expression without a precise aim to veil things, but which could not be understood except by those who had the experience. For it is quite obviously something that is not mental, which came spontaneously — as though it sprang from the heart and the aspiration — which was the completely spontaneous expression of an experience or knowledge, and naturally, an expression which was poetic, which had its own rhythm, its own beauty and could be accessible only to those who had an identical experience. So it was veiled of itself, there was no need to add a veil upon it. It is more than likely that it happened like that.

When one has a true experience which is not the result of a preliminary thought constructing and obtaining the experience by a special effort, when it is a direct and spontaneous experience, an experience that comes from the very intensity of the

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aspiration, it is spontaneously formulated into words. When it is total and complete enough, it is formulated into words... which are not thought out, which are spontaneous, which come out spontaneously from the consciousness. Well, it is more than likely that the Vedas were like that. But only those who have had the experience, had the same state of consciousness, can understand what it means.

There are those sentences which seem absolutely banal and ordinary, in which things seem to be said in an almost childish way and which are written out or heard and then noted down, like that. Well, when read with an ordinary consciousness, they seem sometimes even altogether banal. But if one has the experience, one sees that there is a power of realisation and a truth of expression which give you the key to the experience itself.

But it seems obvious that the modern equivalent, at present, of the Rishi of the olden days... even his spontaneous Vedic expression will be very different in its formulation. For the terrestrial development and human development change the conditions of expression. The way of saying of those times and the way of saying today cannot be the same; and yet the experience can be the same experience of something which cannot be thought about but comes as its living expression.

Mother, were the Vedic Rishis men who had evolved to that state or were they special manifestations?

What do you mean? Whether they were evolutionary beings or involutory beings?

They were probably... no... they were surely involutory beings. But the body was the result of evolution.

But it is absolutely certain that they were involutory beings, that is, beings who had come down from higher regions and used these bodies, who had identified themselves with these bodies.

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This is it, what I said the other day, you know, that what has changed the course of terrestrial and human development totally is bodies becoming perfected enough to be able to serve as instruments for beings of higher regions who have come to incarnate in them in order to use them. And it seems obvious that the Rishis were of these — if not all at least those who were the leaders, those who were at the head. But very probably they formed a group which must have had its own realisation, very independent of the surroundings. They lived, besides, quite isolated, if what is reported is correct.

(Silence)

That's all?... Nothing more? No?

Mother, will the evolution continue or will it be replaced by involution? That is...

Yes, I understand... But what I don't understand is the point of your question — whether the process of terrestrial development will continue by an evolution...

... or whether it will be replaced by an involution.

Yes... but there is one thing you forget. That Sri Aurobindo has said that each new species which appeared upon earth was the result of an involution. So there has always been the combination of the two. A double work: a work that goes from below upward, and an answer which comes from above downward.

Mother, isn't the evolution the inherent Divine manifesting himself? Then why is it necessary?

Involution or evolution?

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Evolution. That is, for example, there was first the evolution of the animal mind. So it was said that the mind was already...

In principle...

Hidden, in principle.

In principle, yes. And what prepares it is this: you see, it has been called by all kinds of names: a divine spark, a Presence, etc., which is infused in the darkness of matter in order to start the evolution. But there is something else: there is a descent and identification of beings, of conscious beings, individualities, in the forms produced by the evolution — and so there is a union which takes place between beings of higher regions and the forms evolved by this divine Presence. And the identification takes place between this immanent godhead and this being which comes down. You see, it is when the psychic being, for instance, identifies itself with a personality of a higher order, a divine emanation, a *vibhuti* who comes to get identified with a psychic being — that is it, this is the thing. But it is not just this one or the other. One does a work of this kind, as I say, a work of development from within outwards; and the other is something which comes down and takes possession of what the first has prepared.

Usually these are individual phenomena. These identifications are individual phenomena. Usually. I don't say that it is impossible for it to be a collective phenomenon; but still, usually they are individual phenomena.

However, it is enough to have the experience and one understands. It becomes very clear.

So, one must not speak, one must act.

There we are. That's all?

Good night, my children.

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Mother reads from *The Synthesis of Yoga*, “The Four Aids”.

Mother, I don't understand “Our sense of personal effort and aspiration comes from the attempt of the egoistic mind to identify itself in a wrong and imperfect way with the workings of the divine Force.”

What is it that you do not understand? The sentence or the idea?

The idea, Mother.

It can be put in very familiar terms.

The individual being, and particularly the mind in it, have an instinctive repulsion to admitting that it's another force than their own small personal one which does things. There is a kind of instinct which makes you feel absolutely convinced that the effort of aspiration, the will to progress are things belonging to you by your own right and, therefore, that you have all the merit.

From the man of art or of literature or of science, who produces something, studies something, and is absolutely convinced that it is he himself who is doing it, to the aspirant yogi who is convinced that it is the ardour of his own aspiration, his personal need for realisation which push him — if someone tells these people (I have had this experience), if someone tells them a little too soon, “Why, no, it is the Divine who aspires in you, it is the divine Force which produces in you...”, they no longer do anything, they fall flat, it doesn't interest them at all any longer; they say, “Good, I have nothing to do then, let the Divine do it.”

And this is what Sri Aurobindo means — that the mind is something so egoistic and so proud that if you take away from

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it the satisfaction it seeks, it no longer collaborates; nor the vital either. And as the physical is very obedient to the vital and the mind, it too collaborates no longer. Then one is before an inert mass which says, “Good, if it isn’t I, well, let the Divine do what He likes, I am not going to do anything at all any more.”

I knew people who had truly made a lot of progress, who were very close to the moment when one emerges into the truth of things, and who were held back simply by this. Because this need to be the source of the action, to have the merit of the effort, this need is so deeply rooted that they cannot take the last step. Sometimes it takes years. If they are told, “No, it isn’t you, this energy which is in you, this will which is in you, this knowledge which is in you, all this is the Divine; it is not what you call yourself”, this makes them so miserable that they can’t do anything any more. That’s what Sri Aurobindo wants to say in this sentence.

There are people who have such a need to keep the sense of their separate personality that if they are forced to admit that all that springs upwards is inspired by the Divine or even done by Him, they keep for their little person the whole side of defects, faults, errors, and they cherish their defects, so that at least something remains theirs, which is indeed their own, their personal property: “Yes, all that is beautiful, luminous, is the Divine; all horrible things — that’s myself.” But a self... a big self; one must not touch it!

Mother, at times one spontaneously feels an aspiration: and at other moments when one wants to aspire it is no longer spontaneous. Then what is the difference, does the Divine aspire?...

Sri Aurobindo answers this. He describes it extremely well.

For all this darkness, all this inconscience, all this ignorance is not at all something personal. It is the condition of the world,

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the state of matter, the state of physical life. And it enters you, makes you act; it's like something pulling the strings of the puppet. All these desires, all these impulses, all these currents of force are things which pass through you, which you obey without even being aware of it, and which you take for yourself. And there is no yourself in this affair. It comes from everywhere and goes everywhere. You are a public square: things enter, go out, make you move.

Mother, why does one have a particular defect and not other defects?

This is the work of Nature.

Why are there some plants of one kind and others of another, some animals of one sort and others of another? There are no two exactly alike combinations in the universe. All the combinations are different. There are no two movements exactly similar in the universe. There is nothing which is reproduced exactly. There are analogies, there are similarities, there are families — there are families of movements which may be called families of vibrations — but there are no two identical things; neither in time nor in space. Nothing is repeated. Otherwise there would be no manifestation, there would be only one single thing.

Manifestation is simply diversity. It is the One deploying Himself in the innumerable, indefinitely.

Nothing? Nowhere?

Sweet Mother, when does the ego become an instrument?

When it is ready to become it.

How does that happen?

How does it happen?... In each one, I believe, it happens in a different way. It may happen suddenly, in the space of a moment,

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by a kind of inner reversal; it may take years; it may take centuries; it may take several lives. For each one there is a moment when it happens: when he is ready.

And I think he is ready when he is completely formed. The purpose of existence of the ego is the formation of the individual. When the individual is ready the ego can disappear. But before that it does not disappear because it has still some work to do.

When the world is ready to receive the new creation, the adverse forces will disappear. But so long as the world needs to be tempted, kneaded, churned in order to be prepared, the adverse forces will be there to be the temptation and that which strikes you, pushes you, prevents you from sleeping, compels you to be absolutely sincere.

A being that is absolutely sincere becomes the master of the adverse forces. But so long as there is egoism in a being or pride or ill-will, it will always be the object of temptation, of attack; and it will always be fully subject to this constant conflict with what, under the appearance of hostile beings, toils in spite of itself at the divine Work.

The time is not absolutely determined. I have already explained this to you several times. There are many fields of consciousness, zones of consciousness superimposed upon one another; and in each one of these fields of consciousness or action there is a determinism which seems absolute. But the intervention in one field of even the next higher field, like the intervention of the vital in the physical, introduces the determinism of the vital in that of the physical, and necessarily transforms the determinism of the physical. And if through aspiration, the inner will, self-giving and true surrender one can enter into contact with the higher regions or even the supreme region, from up there the supreme determinism will come down and transform all the intermediate determinisms and it will be able to bring about in a so-to-say almost inexistent span of time what would have otherwise taken either years or lives to be accomplished. But this is the only way.

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If at the time of some event or circumstance — take for instance, to simplify things, of a danger — if at that time instead of trying to struggle in the domain where one is, one can traverse in a great soaring all the domains which are rungs in the consciousness, and go to the supreme region, what Sri Aurobindo calls the Transcendent, if one can enter into contact with this Transcendent, in a state of perfect surrender, it is He who will act and change everything, in all circumstances — to the extent that this will be what people call miracles, because they do not understand how it can happen.

The sole secret is to know how to climb up right to the top.

That's all?

You wanted a meditation...

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Mother reads from *The Synthesis of Yoga*, “The Four Aids”.

(*To a child*) Have you prepared a question for your Birthday?

What is the significance of 18?

Of the number 18?

It depends on how it is read.

It can be read as $10+8$; it can be read as $9+9$; it can be read as $12+6$. And each of these readings has a different meaning.

If we take $10+8$, it can indicate something quite immobile: because 10 indicates a static perfection, something which has reached its perfection and stops there; and 8 is a double enclosure, that is, something which is framed in, surrounded, demarcated, and which naturally stops there. So if we put 10 and 8 together it truly makes something which can be an accomplishment but one that is terminated.

On the other hand, if we take $9+9$: 9 is the process of creation — not the creation itself but its process — and $9+9$ is a process of creation which continues and follows another process of creation, that is, a creation which is dual and implies the idea that it continues indefinitely. This gives us two meanings which are almost contradictory.

And if we take 12 and 6, then it becomes something very good. 12, you know what it is, don't you? It is the number of perfection in conception and creation; and 6 is the number of the new creation. So if you put 12 and 6 together, you truly have something absolutely remarkable.

Now we can have other combinations. But it becomes a little more complicated.

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18 itself — as 18 — was the number of the consciousness in its effort for material realisation: the consciousness trying to realise itself materially, express itself materially.

So now you have something...

From the social point of view it is the first number for attaining majority, the first majority; that is, from eighteen onwards one has one's own will, one has the right to have one's own will, from the social point of view. It is clearly a very interesting starting-point.

There, then.

Sweet Mother, has each person's number a different significance for each one?

If one wants to give it, yes.

If one doesn't think about it, it doesn't signify anything at all. It's the importance one gives it which counts.

Numbers are a way of speaking. It is a language, as all the sciences, all the arts, everything that man produces; it is always a way of speaking, it is a language. If one adopts this language it becomes living, expressive, useful. As we need words to make ourselves understood usually — unfortunately it is liable to all kinds of confusions, but still we haven't yet reached the state where we can communicate in silence, which, obviously, would be a very much higher state — well, if you want to give numbers a meaning in your life, they can reveal to you quite a lot of things. But it's like that. It is like astrology: if one wants to study the relation between his life and the movement of the stars, one can also find all kinds of useful information.

Fundamentally it is a way of knowing, nothing else — a process. True knowledge is beyond words, beyond systems, beyond languages; it is in a silent identity. It is in fact the only one which does not err.

What else?

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In the prayer you gave us this time for Kali Puja, you have written something in Sanskrit.

It is Sri Aurobindo who has written a mantra.¹

Then why has he written like this?

Why has he written this?

Why don't you ask him? Perhaps he will tell you.

It is an evocation. You know what it means? Did you find someone to explain it to you? No? Ah, that's the first thing you should have done, ask what the meaning of these four words is.

The transcription underneath: there are only two of them. He had begun transcribing and then his paper... it was on a tiny little scrap of paper, and there wasn't any more space to write everything; so he stopped.

Have you read it? You don't know how to read Sanskrit? So now you must find someone to show you how to read it; and then to give you the significance. And after that you will ask me why he wrote it. Not now!

Sweet Mother, has that Chaldean legend² which you have written any relation with Kali Puja?

Yes, my child, because on Kali Puja day I *always* distribute the flowers of "Divine's Love"; for Kali is the most loving of all the aspects of the Mahashakti; hers is the most active and most powerful Love. And that is why every year I distribute the petals of "Divine's Love" on Kali's Day. And so naturally this explanation of why these flowers were chosen to express the Divine's Love — it is a sufficient explanation.

¹ OM anandamayi chaitanyamayi satyamayi parame

² See Appendix at the end of the talk.

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Mother, who was this man you have spoken about?

Who told you that it was a man?

I haven't said whether it was a man or a woman. I took care to put only "a divine being".

Who?

It is a prehistoric story, so you cannot find any information about it. It isn't written anywhere. There are no written documents.

Haven't you any questions to ask on what we read today?

Sweet Mother, is personal effort always egoistic?

There we are, you see. French is not as rich a language as we could hope for. In English there are two words: "selfish" and "egoistic". And they don't mean the same thing. You know the difference in English, don't you? Well, in this case, the French word "égoïsme" is in the sense of egoism in English, not in the sense of "selfishness".

There may be an effort which is not at all selfish and is yet egoistic, because the moment it becomes personal it is egoistic — that means, it is based on the ego. But this does not mean that it is not generous, compassionate, unselfish nor that it is for narrow personal ends. It is not like that. It may be for a very unselfish work. But so long as an ego is there it is egoistic. And so long as the sense of one's own personality is there, it is naturally something egoistic; it is founded on the presence of the ego.

And this must last for a fairly long time, because it must last until the individuality is completely formed, until it has reached a certain state of individual perfection; then the presence of the ego is no longer necessary — but not before one has attained the maximum individual development.

It is not just a tiny little job. It asks for much time and much effort. And when one has attained the perfection of his

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own development, when one is an individual being who is truly personal, that is, who has all the characteristics of something different from all others — for in principle there are no two individualities exactly alike in the world — then, when one has succeeded in expressing the individuality one is, is exclusively, represents exclusively in the universal creation, then one is ready for the ego to disappear — but not before.

It asks for a certain length of time, not a little effort, a fairly complete education. But one may be quite unselfish long before being ready not to have the ego any longer. That is something else.

For years, all the time I have been translating from English into French — that is, for a very long time, something like thirty years of this work, perhaps thirty-five — I have tried to find two words to say that, to make a difference. I haven't found them yet, because in French one can't fabricate words, it is not allowed; that's the misfortune! In English you can make as many words as you like and if they are fine and well made they are accepted. In French, unless it is recognised by the French Academy in its dictionary, you will be told, "This is not correct." So I haven't yet found them.

(Looking at a child) He is up to some mischief! (Laughter)

Sweet Mother, a rich man is never satisfied, he wants to have more riches; a scholar wants to have more knowledge. Does this show that they are seeking the Divine?

He is in search of an absolute in life, that's obvious. Perhaps it is analogous, I don't know.

It is this: "To enjoy him in all experience of passivity and activity, of peace and of power, of unity and of difference, is the happiness which the jiva, the individual soul manifested in the world, is obscurely seeking."

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Yes. But you are not told anything about the love of riches or the love of power or the love of knowledge. You are told about the divine Love; it is not altogether the same thing. Nothing is said about enjoying ambition or desire or even aspiration; what is spoken of is the enjoying of the divine Presence. That's completely different; there is no similarity.

I admit that I don't quite catch the meaning of your question. I think you are mixing up the Divine with growth and increase and development, no? perhaps at best with progress. But it is not the same thing. Progress is perhaps the base upon which the present world was constructed, one can take it like that; but it is not the Divine.

What were you trying to say?

For each being there is a thirst for something.

That the thirst for something is the Divine? No, my child. It can be quite simply a desire. How can the thirst for something be the Divine?

I see clearly what you are trying to say, but truly you do not say it: that is, this inner flame of aspiration is what you call the Divine; this inner flame of aspiration which never dies out, which always burns, burns more and more; what in India is called Agni, you know, the will to progress, the power of aspiration; this is what you call the Divine. It is an aspect of the Divine, that's true, but it is not the Divine. It is only one aspect, that is, a divine way of being.

Sweet Mother, in the individual do the past evolution and the present nature always decide the final intervention of a higher plane which brings about a change?

What kind of question is this, I don't understand it very well. Past evolution?...

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And the present nature...

And the present nature? It is not the same thing, they are two different things.

No, Mother, because here it is written: "The mind's door of entry to the conception of him must necessarily vary according to the past evolution and the present nature."

Yes, these two things are completely different. That is, the evolution in former lives and the present nature, that is, the nature of the present body, determine one's approach to the Divine.

We can take a very... an over-simple example. If one is born in any particular religion, quite naturally the first effort to approach the Divine will be within that religion; or else if in former lives one has passed through a certain number of experiences which determined the necessity of another kind of experiences, quite naturally one will follow the path which leads to those experiences.

You see, the life of the psychic being is made up of successive experiences in successive physical existences. So, it may be put a little childishly or romantically: you have a psychic which for some reason or other has incarnated so as to be able to have all the experiences which royalty gives — for instance, supreme power. After it has had its experience, has had what it wanted, it can, before leaving the body, decide that in the next life it will take birth in obscure conditions, because it needs to have experiences which can be had in a modest condition and with the freedom one feels when he has no responsibilities, you see, responsibilities like those the heads of states have, for instance. So quite naturally, in its next life it will be born in certain conditions which fulfil its need. And it is in accordance with this experience that it will approach the Divine.

Then, in addition, it is the product of the union of two physical natures, you know, and sometimes of two vital natures.

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The result of this is more or less a kind of mixture of these natures; but it brings about a tendency, what is called a character. Well, this character will make it fit for a certain field, a certain category of experiences.

So with what has been determined, decided in former lives or in a former life, and then the environment in which it is born — that is, the conditions in which its present body has been formed — its approach to and search for the Divine will be in accordance with a definite line which is its own, and which, naturally, is not at all the same as that of its neighbour or any other being.

I said a while ago: each individual is a special manifestation in the universe, therefore his true path must be an absolutely unique path. There are similarities, there are resemblances, there are categories, families, churches, ideals also, that is, a certain collective way of approaching the Divine, which creates a kind of church, not materialised but in a more subtle world — there are all these things — but for the details of the path, the details of yoga, it will be different according to each individual, necessarily, and conditioned physically by his present bodily structure, and vitally, mentally and psychically, of course, by former lives.

The present structure, Mother, is it that which decides the intervention of the higher planes or not, in order to work miracles?

That is to say, whether it is predestined that the higher planes...

The other day you said that it can change completely.

Yes

Then, if the present remains like this...

But look here! Let us take an altogether ordinary example which

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is very partial and very superficial. You are born in India. Being born in India you are born with a certain religious and philosophic attitude. But if for some reason or other you want to free yourself from this atavism and influence, if you begin to follow, study, practise the religion or philosophy of another country, you can change the conditions of your inner development. It is a little more difficult, that is, it asks for a greater effort for liberation, but it is very far from being impossible. In fact there are many people who do it, who love to free themselves from what comes to them from their present birth; by some sort of special taste they like to seek elsewhere what they think they won't be able to find at home. And in this way you change the consequences of your birth completely.

Now you may tell me that this taste for the new or the unknown can come to you from a former life; this is probable. But it depends on what dominates in your being; whether it is the result of former psychic lives and psychic resolutions or whether it is the immediate consequence of your present constitution.

But sometimes these present structures are contradictory to what was...

Contradictory? In what way contradictory? To former influences? It is never contradictory. It can be only complementary.

When things seem contradictory to you, it is always because you have remained on too low a plane. If you know how to climb up a few rungs of the ladder, all contradictions disappear, everything becomes complementary.

But what prevents me from going on is the nature, isn't it?

What prevents you?...

It prevents many people. It is not very easy.

This is a part of the liberation. Liberation is obtained

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through austerities, we know that. But there are certain austerities which people refuse to practise, for example this (*Mother puts her finger on her lips.*) They talk, talk, talk — much too much.

(Noises of the wind in the mike)

We are going to enact a storm-scene! That's how thunder is created on the stage.

There you are, my children. That's all?

Who has a *very* interesting question to ask?

To ask an interesting question one must begin by thinking in an interesting way.

Mother, what do you call an interesting question?

Ah! A question worth answering. (*Laughter*) Something which raises the possibility of a new answer and an opening on a new field of knowledge.

For example, when you ask me for the explanation of a word, I find that this is not an interesting question, because you have only to open a dictionary. When you ask me the answer to a question which has been given by Sri Aurobindo or by someone else in published books, it doesn't seem to be an interesting question to me, because you have only to open the book and read.

But when, for instance, you have a personal experience which you do not understand very well and for which you need clarification, then your question can become interesting.

(Silence)

No interesting question?

So nobody has an interesting question according to the definition just given...?

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APPENDIX

An Old Chaldean Legend

Long, long ago, in the dry land which is now Arabia, a divine being incarnated upon earth to awaken in it the supreme love. As expected it was persecuted by men, misunderstood, suspected, pursued. Mortally wounded by its assailants, it wanted to die quietly in solitude in order to be able to accomplish its work, and being pursued, it ran away. Suddenly, in the vast desert land there appeared a small pomegranate bush. The saviour crept in under the low branches, to leave its body in peace; and immediately the bush spread out miraculously, it grew higher, larger, became deep and thick, so that when the pursuers passed by, they did not even suspect that the One whom they were chasing was hidden there, and they went their way.

While drop by drop the sacred blood fell, fertilising the soil, the bush was covered with marvellous flowers, scarlet, large, crowded with petals... innumerable drops of blood.

These are the flowers which express and contain for us the Divine's Love.

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Mother reads from *The Synthesis of Yoga*, “The Four Aids”.

I did not understand the last part very well.

Which last part, my child?

“... the sadhak of the integral Yoga will not be satisfied until he has included all other names and forms of Deity in his own conception...”

Yes.

Why? It says what it means. What is it that you don't understand there? What don't you understand?

I don't understand the meaning.

(Silence)

But my child... You are told: there is only one reality and all that is is only a multiple expression of a single reality. Therefore, all the divine manifestations, all the forms it has taken in the course of time, all the names which men have given it, are only manifestations, forms and names of one sole, unique Godhead.

As human beings are very limited, it is usually easier for them to follow one path rather than another. But that is just a tiny little beginning; and if one wants to attain the heights, one must be able to find the Divine equally through all the paths, and understand that it is the sole and same Divine, whatever the different appearances may be.

This is what Sri Aurobindo tells you: that you cannot stop, you cannot be satisfied until you have felt *absolutely concretely*

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that there is only one *single* Divine, there is only one *single* Reality, and that, from whatever angle It is seen or whatever path is taken to attain It, it will always be one sole and same thing which you will meet. So one who is developed enough, vast enough to be able to follow what we call the Integral Yoga, must have the capacity to approach the Divine by all possible paths. If he doesn't want to follow them himself because it takes time... though there is a certain degree of development which enables one in a few days or a few hours to follow a path which would otherwise take a whole lifetime... still, if one has no taste for this kind of gymnastics, at least one should have an understanding open enough to be aware that all this is fundamentally one sole and identical thing. And whether you give it this name or that or no name at all, you understand, or several names, you are always speaking of the same thing which is the single Divine who is all things.

Don't you catch it?

It is only the mind and the limited human consciousness which make distinctions. And through these differences you get into a confusion. You distinguish only by differences, and differences mean just the illusory outer consciousness. As soon as you really enter within, you immediately have the sense of a total identity and all these divergences seem absolutely ridiculous to you.

Sweet Mother, what is the difference between the supreme man and the divine man?

In one case it is the peak of humanity. "Supreme" means the human being who is at the peak of humanity, that is, the perfect man.

In the other case, it is God who has entered a human body. What is human is only the body, the outer form, not the consciousness. In the first case it is the human consciousness which has attained its perfection.

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That's all?
Something over there?

Sri Aurobindo says here: "The divine working is not the working which the egoistic mind desires or approves; for it uses error in order to arrive at truth, suffering in order to arrive at bliss, imperfection in order to arrive at perfection." How?

Like that. As the world is today.

He explains it at great length afterwards. He says that the human mind would accept to have faith only if the Divine acted in accordance with its conception; and man's ordinary conception of what is divine is that of a perpetual miracle — what he calls a miracle, that is, something that takes place without rhyme or reason. And so, as he is not in the presence of this... But it is much more subtle than that... If we arrived from another world where things happen altogether differently, which is difficult for us to conceive... but which would happen in a way where the logic would be totally different — the logic of events, causes, consequences and effects — if we arrived suddenly from another world into this one, all that we would see would appear absolutely miraculous to us, because we wouldn't be able to understand the logic of events.

We are habituated to what occurs as it occurs; it is simply a matter of habit, for from the first breath we drew upon earth we have been accustomed to see things in this way, and so it seems quite ordinary to us, because it occurs in this way. But if we could manage to get out of this habit, if we could see things from another point of view, we would immediately be able to feel that kind of impression of the miraculous, because we would no longer see the logic of events with the habitual sense.

We have a certain habit of a particular logic of causes and effects, of the consequences of all things, the relation between all movements. It is for us a fact which we accept, even without

thinking about it, because we have always lived inside it. But if we had not always lived inside it, we would see it in another way. And one can make this experiment: if one goes out of the determinism of the world as it is at present — this world which is a mixture of the physical, vital, mental and of something of a spiritual influence or infusion (quite veiled), everything that happens is the combination of all this — if we go out of all that (we can do it), if we rise above the physical, material world as it is, and enter another consciousness, we perceive things *totally* differently.

And then we see that behind these appearances which seem to us absolutely logical and extremely natural, and almost necessary, there is an action which, if perceived in one's ordinary consciousness, would seem *all the time* miraculous.

There is an intervention of forces, consciousnesses, movements, influences, which is invisible or imperceptible for our ordinary consciousness and *constantly* changes the whole course of circumstances.

We don't need to go very far; it is enough to take just a step outside the ordinary consciousness in order to realise this. I have already said several times that if one finds the psychic consciousness within oneself and identifies oneself with it, well, immediately one feels a complete reversal of circumstances and sees things almost totally differently from the way one ordinarily sees them. For one perceives the force which is acting instead of the result of this action.

At present you see only the result of the action of the forces, and this seems to you natural, logical. And it's only when something a little abnormal occurs — or it's a little abnormal for you — that you begin to feel surprised. But if you were in another state of consciousness, what seems abnormal to you now would no longer be so. You would see that it is the effect of something else, of another action than the one you perceive.

But even from the purely material point of view, you are used to certain things, they have been explained to you: for

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example, electric light, or that it is enough to press a button to start a car. You can explain it, you have been told why, and so it seems absolutely natural to you. But I had instances of people who did not know, who were completely ignorant, who came from a place where these things had not yet penetrated, and who were suddenly shown a statue being lighted up by rays of light; they fell on their knees in adoration: it was a divine manifestation.

And I have seen someone else who was in the same state, it was a child who knew nothing. In front of him a button was pressed and the car started; it seemed a *tremendous* miracle to him. Well, it is like that. You are used to certain things, they seem absolutely natural to you. If you were not used to them, you would see, you would think them miracles.

Well, turn over the problem. There is a heap of things you cannot explain to yourself, there is a host of interventions which change the course of circumstances and which you don't even notice. And so everything seems to you ordinary, monotonous and without any particular interest. But if you had the knowledge and could see that all these things which seem absolutely normal to you because you are used to them and have not even asked yourself "How does this happen in this way?" — if you had the knowledge and saw how it happens, what it is that acts, why for example someone who acts so imprudently that he would have broken his head does not break it, why everything seems arranged for a frightful accident to take place and it does not occur, and thousands, millions of things like that which happen every day and everywhere—if you had enough knowledge to see why it is like that, then at the same time you could say, "Look, there is something like a force, a consciousness, a power which acts and which is not from the material domain. Materially, logically, this is what should have happened, and it did not happen." You say, "Ah! It was his good luck", don't you? And then you are satisfied, it's all right for you.

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(Silence)

It is the ignorant, limited, egoistic consciousness which demands miracles. As soon as one is enlightened, one knows that everywhere and always there is miracle.

And the more faith one has in this miracle and this Grace, the more capable one becomes of seeing it, or perceiving it constantly at every place where it is. It is ignorance and lack of faith, it is blind egoism which prevents one from seeing.

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Mother reads from *The Synthesis of Yoga*, “The Four Aids”.

How is Time a friend?

It depends on how you look at it. Everything depends on the relation you have with it. If you take it as a friend, it becomes a friend. If you consider it as an enemy, it becomes your enemy.

But that’s not what you are asking. What you are asking is how one feels when it is an enemy and how when it is a friend. Well, when you become impatient and tell yourself, “Oh, I must succeed in doing this and why don’t I succeed in doing it?” and when you don’t succeed immediately in doing it and fall into despair, then it is your enemy. But when you tell yourself, “It is all right, I didn’t succeed this time, I shall succeed next time, and I am sure one day or another I shall do it”, then it becomes your friend.

Is time only subjective or it is something concrete like a personality?

Perhaps this also depends on how you consider it. All forces are personal; all things in Nature are personal. But if we consider them as impersonal things, our relation with them is impersonal.

Take for instance what has just happened. If you are a meteorologist and have calculated all the wind-currents and all that, and say, “Given that this has happened, that will happen, and there will be so many days of rain, and all that.” So this is a force for you, which we are compelled to call a force of Nature, and you can do nothing about it except look on quietly and wait for the number of days to pass. But if it happens that you have this personal relation with the little conscious entities which are

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behind the wind, behind the storm, behind the rain, the thunder, behind all these so-called forces of Nature, which are forces and personal forces, if you have a personal relation with them and can create a kind of friendship through this relation, instead of considering them as enemies and inexorable mechanisms which you have to put up with without being able to do anything, perhaps you could manage to establish a slightly more friendly relation and have an influence over them and ask them: "Why do you feel like blowing and making the rain fall, why don't you do it elsewhere?"

And with my own eyes I have seen... I have seen this here, seen it in France, seen it in Algeria... the rain falling at a particular, altogether fixed place, and it was exactly a place where it absolutely needed to rain, because it was dry and there was a field which needed watering, and at another place there was... at a distance from here to the end of the hall, at the other place there was a small sunlit spot, everything was dry, because to have the sun there was necessary. Naturally, if you seek the scientific point of view, they will explain this to you very scientifically. But I indeed have seen it as the result of an intervention... someone who knew how to ask it and obtained it.

In Algeria I saw not a few things like that, very interesting ones. And there, just because there was a certain atmosphere of a little more real knowledge it could be said, there were little entities, as for example entities which handled snow, you see, which produced snow, and which could come, enter a room and tell someone, "Now snow should fall here!" (It had never snowed in that country, never.) "Snow! You are joking. So near the Sahara it is going to snow?" "It must, because they have planted fir trees on the mountain, and when we see fir trees, we come. The fir trees are there to call us; so we come." And so, you see, there was a discussion, and the little being went away with the permission to bring snow, and when it had gone, there was a little pool of snow water on the floor, melted snow which had turned into water. It was physical... and the mountain was

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covered with snow. In Algeria! It is *very near* the Sahara, you go down a few kilometres and you are at the Sahara. Someone had playfully covered all the hills with fir trees. “The fir tree belongs to cold countries. Why do you call us? We are coming.” All this is a true story, it is not an invention.

All depends on your relation. This too, it is quite possible the meteorologist scholars would have been able to explain, I know nothing about it, they explain everything one wants.

(A question was put to Mother about the regularity of the seasons, but was not recorded clearly enough for transcription.)

What, in fact, is regularity? I know that from the time I have come here I have seen all possible things, and only on a few days — very few — I could say, “Look! We are at the height of summer, it’s summer weather”, and that was at the beginning of November. It was much hotter than it was in May this year. Only we think like that: “Now it is summer; after that comes autumn, then winter will come.” And so we adapt ourselves, but it is not true. Well, look! There are things like that. The people of the country told me... I came in the month of April the second time... the first time, the first time, as we know it was on the 29th of March, that is, April follows. In those days it was understood: it *never* rained here for at least three months — not a drop of water; all used to become dry, the leaves which are put on the roofs used to dry up so much that suddenly one day they burst into flames, it was like that. I come, and a *terrific* rainfall! Then the people looked at me (here they have a little of something like a feeling that things are not altogether mechanical, you see). “How does it happen to rain?” Then I answered, “I don’t know, it’s not I, but I have friendship with the rain.”

I went to Pau in the South of France at a time when it never rains there — that is, people who could remember from

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their very infancy had never seen a drop of water — it rained in torrents.

I went to South Algeria, naturally it was dry and there was torrid heat — it began to rain! (*Laughter*)

And then here the same thing happened, and they said that it had been seen only once before... I don't know any more... something like two hundred years ago. They remembered this, and that someone had come and it had rained, and they had taken it as an absolutely auspicious sign, you see, that it was the sign of an exceptional destiny. They have ideas here about auspicious and inauspicious hours, and auspicious events and inauspicious events. Well, when someone arrives at a time when it does not rain and the rain falls, it seems to be a very auspicious event.

Therefore things are as one looks at them. But I have seen other things which are like this, but not very pleasant. It is from the time men have invented — not invented but discovered — and begun to play like babies with things they did not know, and have made atom bombs and other worse things still. This has truly disturbed *terribly* all these little entities which lived indeed according to a certain rhythm which was their own, and were in the habit of commanding at least events that can be foreseen. This has disturbed them very very much, they have suffered terribly from it, and it has made them lose their heads, they no longer know what they are doing.

There was a time at the end of the War, when things had truly become *terribly* chaotic up there, they lived in a kind of absurdity; and as these unfortunate experiences continue, they have not yet come out of their panic. They are panic-stricken. Truly men play with things which they know only from outside, that is, don't know at all. They know just enough to make a wrong use of them. Anything may happen, including, alas, catastrophes which were foretold long ago. It may happen... It depends... on what will intervene.

There is something to be done. I told you this. I said, "If you don't want it to rain, pray." You took it as a joke.

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What is the cause of this rain?

Ah! It seems... there must have been a fault somewhere. Someone has been displeased... Who is displeased?

What we do on the first¹ can anger somebody?

Not what we do. Surely not that. Perhaps something in the way we do it. You want me to tell you something... my experience of things... because all this interests me, and I observe it. Unfortunately I am a spectator, I don't intervene. It is very difficult to make me intervene in these things. Still, I wanted to know and I observed... and this... today I saw, saw this... how to put it?... it is neither heard nor seen, it is at once heard and seen and known and everything else you may like.

All this work which you have done, which has taken almost a year, all these efforts you have made, all the difficulties you have overcome, all this you have done as an offering to the divine Work, you see, with all your sincerity and goodwill, the best of your ability and a complete good-heartedness. Yes, you have put into it all that you could, you have succeeded to a certain extent, in any case you have done things as well as you could. Then "this" added with a smile which, indeed, was a little impish: "What is it to you whether a few stupid fools see what you have done or not? Now you have done the work, you have accomplished it, you have shown what you could do. What is it to you whether a few foolish spectators see it or not?" It was *clear*, you see. I am expressing it; in expressing it I take away something from it. It was a state of consciousness, and then, indeed, it troubled me a little, because... trouble! that's a way of speaking... I told myself: "Heavens! If it is like that after all, we can't be sure that the rain will stop. For if truly it is of no

¹ December 1 is the day of the Annual Programme of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education. In 1955 it took place in the Playground where the spectators had to sit in the open.

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importance that some thousand odd people should see what we have done, if our offering has been accepted as an offering made as well as possible and with all our heart, the attitude is not to be anxious about the result — we do not care for the result. Then, perhaps, the rain will continue.”

I am continuing my investigation, I don't know what is going to happen. But in any case, I ought to tell you that I have not yet taken any decision to stop the rain. I am still at the stage of looking on. We shall see. In any case, it was charming. I said, “Was there someone who introduced an egoistic or self-interested feeling into this, and who did not do the thing as it ought to be done, in the right spirit? Where is the fault?” and all that. There was nothing of all this. We were perfectly satisfied with what we had done. It was work well done, done in the right spirit, as well as we could do it. Everybody was happy. There was some impishness somewhere. Was it impishness? It was something much higher than that: it was an observation. So we are going to see. As for me, it interests me, these things. Unfortunately it is like this, I can't take sides, I look on, and it amuses me. (*Laughter*)

I ought to say that if I consider all the effort you have made, and made so well, I tell myself, “Oh, they are very sweet. Truly they should be able to show it.” But it's like that, you see, it's like that, it is not a will which wakes up and says, “Now that's it!” When *that* wakes up, everything goes well, everybody obeys, even the little entities up there. And that is why I told you, “You must pray to them”, because if you begin praying, you, I shall naturally be with you in your prayer. That is it, that's the trick. (*Laughter*)

Was the effort really satisfactory?

Well, you see, if I place myself at the outward point of view of human capacity and of what can be done, I am obliged to say, “One can do better.” But *this* thing does not look at that. It's

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the thing I spoke to you about yesterday, which, you see, takes the effort in its deeper sense, as the offering that's made.

We know, we have said this many a time, that all work is a prayer made with the body and that the true attitude in work is an offering to the Divine. Well, *this* was satisfied with the way the thing was done. For I was looking on, to see, as I said, if there were things which were not as they should have been. But in any case, to the eye of this consciousness which was looking on, it was satisfying. Materially, you see, I said, "In the outer human consciousness this can be done much better." That of course is understood, we haven't reached the height of perfection, far from that, but it must also be said that it is only a very small part of our activity... that we are trying much more than this, that it is only one of the movements of our sadhana, you see. We are busy with many other things besides this... one thing among many others... and to put up something like this according to the accomplishment which the laws of human perfection demand, infinitely more time, infinitely more work and infinitely more means would have been necessary. But we are not seeking an exclusive perfection in one thing or another, we are trying to make everything go forward together to a common, integral perfection. And these things have their place and importance, but they don't have an exclusive place and importance. Therefore, from the external point of view, one may criticise and find something to say and all that; but it is not that, the true point of view. Inwardly, it is well.

You see, it happens all the time to the newcomers, strangers, visitors, to those who come with all ordinary human mental constructions. They come here and say, "Bah, bah, bah, there is nothing so remarkable, it's not so extraordinary, all their capacities are of the average kind." But this is because they think like what I call dull-witted fellows, with an altogether ordinary consciousness; but if they could see behind the appearances the reality of things, they would see that it is not as easy as that, that there is something else which is advancing all together towards

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a realisation which goes infinitely beyond all their little conceptions; this they cannot see. And that is why, probably... this thing which was answering me said, "But what is it to you whether a thousand odd fools see or not the effort you have made?" For it is truly... one thing is certain, that if you see the deep law of things and are in contact with a higher consciousness in order to realise something that far surpasses all human conceptions, what can a human opinion mean to you? It is as though you asked a dog the value of a problem of science you have solved. It wouldn't occur to you, would it? You know that the dog doesn't have the elements necessary for judging your scientific problem. But here there's a still greater difference... people haven't even the slightest notion of what the spiritual life is and the divine realisation, and naturally because of their very ignorance they come and judge all this with a perfect ease, what you do or don't do and the way of doing it and how you live, because they understand nothing about it and see nothing at all.

That is why to those who come and ask what qualifications are obtained at Sri Aurobindo International University,² I reply: "Go then, go and see, there are numerous universities which are *infinitely* better than ours, much better equipped, much better organised. Ours is nothing, you see, it is just a drop of water in the ocean. Go then, there are others everywhere, there are many even in India, there are many in all the great countries, infinitely more important universities, better than ours. Go there then. You will have much more of what you need." This is why we do not try to enter into competition with other institutions.

Then, Mother, what attitude should we have before these spectators?

To love them with all your heart, my children, and wish that they may be born to the light, that's the only thing, that's the only

² Now the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education.

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way of solving the problem. If they begin to talk thoughtlessly, you can be polite and not contradict them — not say anything at all to them. You must avoid above all discussing and trying to convince them, because that's an impossible attempt. You must be absolutely indifferent to their compliments and their criticisms. It is much easier to be indifferent to criticism than to compliments.

When Mme. David-Neel — I have spoken to you about her, haven't I? Mme. David-Neel who is a militant Buddhist and a great Buddhistic luminary — when she came to India she went to meet some of those great sages or gurus — I shan't give you the names, but she went to one who looked at her and asked her... for they were speaking of yoga and personal effort and all that... he looked at her and asked her, "Are you indifferent to criticism?" Then she answered him with the classical expression, "Does one care about a dog's barking?" But she added to me when telling me the story, very wittily: "Fortunately he did not ask me whether I was indifferent to compliments, because *that* is much more difficult!"

Still, there we are. Naturally you must avoid thinking that you are in the least superior, and I am going to tell you why. For I have just spoken to you about something and about an inner realisation, but except for a few vague and imprecise phrases, you would be almost absolutely incapable of telling me what I spoke about. You know vaguely, like that, that we are in the course of doing something, but what it is and what it's leading to and what are the inner changes which can set us a little apart from ordinary humanity, you are not conscious of, and you would feel extremely uneasy if I asked you to explain to me what it is. So, as in a being it is only the consciousness which counts, you must not think yourselves at all superior.

For — one of two things — you cannot think yourselves superior unless you are unconscious. The minute you are truly conscious you lose this notion of superiority and inferiority completely. So, in both the cases, you must not feel yourselves

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superior — for it is a smallness and a meanness — but feel full of goodwill and sympathy and not care at all for what people say or don't say, but be polite, because it is always preferable to be polite rather than impolite, for you put yourself into contact with more harmonious forces and can fight much better against the forces of destruction and ugliness, for no other reasons than these, because we like harmony and it is better to keep that; but essentially you should be far above all this and feel interested only in your relation with the Divine, what He expects from you and what you want to do for Him. For *this* is the only thing which matters. All the rest has no importance.

There are people who want to show their superiority. This proves that they are quite small. The more one wants to show his superiority, the more it proves that he is quite small. You see, a little child who lives simply without looking at itself and how it lives, is much greater than you because it is spontaneous.

There, then. Now, you have something to ask me?

No, nothing?

How is it possible that something almost perfectly done by a mass of goodwills can be spoilt by one single little ill-will?

That the little ill-will disturbs all the work of goodwill? Who said that?

It happens very often.

(Mother did not hear the disciple well.)

It always happens?

In the Letters Sri Aurobindo says it: The Supermind could have descended but because of the ill-will of the people in the Ashram it was obliged to withdraw.

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But surely I have never seen this. I admit that I don't understand. I rather find it just the other way, that even when there is a mass of bad wills, if there is only one good will somewhere (*laughter*), it makes the Grace act and everything goes well.

What you just said...

That has nothing to do with this.

*If there is a concentration...*³

What did I say? Why, I am forgetting... I am hearing impossible things. What was it?

(Pavitra) *An observation.*

An observation of what?

(The disciple mutters an answer which Mother does not hear.)

Do you understand what he is saying? I don't.

(A child) *He took this for ill-will.*

He hasn't understood anything at all, understood absolutely nothing of what I said. Absolutely nothing. It is not at all that. It is not at all that. It did not come from below, it came from a much higher plane than your consciousness can reach. It is not ill-will, infinitely far from that...

That's how people understand what I say! I must be really careful! Is there anyone else who has understood in this way? (*To a child*) You too understood it like this, didn't you? (*Laughter*)

³ The disciple having only vaguely heard the French word "constatation" mistook it for "concentration".

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Look, it never even occurred to me. I understood *nothing* of what he wanted to say. It was so different. If for a moment I had thought it could be understood like this, I would never have said anything.

Good!

Then, that's all, I think that's enough for today...

How can one become indifferent to criticism?

By climbing somewhere up on the ladder — in one's own consciousness — looking at things a little more vastly, a little more generally. For example, if at a particular moment there is something which holds you, grips you like that, holds you tight, close pressed, and you absolutely want it to happen, and you are fighting against a terrible obstacle, you see, something which is preventing it from happening; if simply just at that moment you begin to feel, to realise the myriads and myriads of years there were before this present moment, and the myriads and myriads of years there will be after this present moment, and what importance this little event has in relation to all that — there is no need to enter a spiritual consciousness or anything else, simply enter into relation with space and time, with all that is before, all that is after and all that is happening at the same time — if one is not an idiot, immediately he tells himself, “Oh, well, I am attaching importance to something which doesn't have any.” Necessarily so, you see. It loses all its importance, immediately.

If you can visualise, you know, simply the immensity of the creation — I am not now speaking of rising to spiritual heights — simply the immensity of the creation in time and space, and this little event on which you are concentrated with an importance... as though it were something of some importance... immediately it does this (*gesture*) and it dissolves, if you do it sincerely. If, naturally, there is one part of yourself which tells you, “Ah, but for me it has an importance”, then, there, you

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have only to leave that part behind and keep your consciousness as it is. But if sincerely you want to see the true value of things, it is very easy.

There are other methods, you know. There is a Chinese sage who advises you to lie down upon events as one floats on one's back upon the sea, imagining the immensity of the ocean and that you let yourself go floating upon this... upon the waves, you see, like something contemplating the skies and letting itself be carried away. In Chinese they call this *Wu Wei* When you can do this all your troubles are gone. I knew an Irishman who used to lie flat on his back and look outside, as much as possible on an evening when stars were in the sky, he looked, contemplated the sky and imagined that he was floating in that immensity of countless luminous points.

And immediately all troubles are calmed.

There are many ways. But sincerely, you have only to... have the sense of relativity between your little person and the importance you give to the things which concern you, and the universal immensity; this is enough. Naturally, there is another way, it is to free oneself from the earth consciousness and rise into a higher consciousness where these terrestrial things take their true place — which is quite small, you see.

But... indeed, once, very long ago, when I was still in Paris and used to see Mme. David-Neel almost every day, she, you see, was full of her own idea and told me, “You should not think of an action, it means attachment for the action; when you want to do something, it means that you are still tied to the things of this world.” Then I told her, “No, there is nothing easier. You have only to imagine *everything* that has been done before and all that will be done later and all that is happening now, and you will then realise that your action is a breath, like this, one second in eternity, and you can no longer be attached to it.” At that time I didn't know the text of the Gita. I had not read it completely yet, you see... (*some words inaudible here*)... not this verse which I translate in my own way: “And detached from

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all fruit of action, act.” It is not like this, but still that’s what it means. This I did not know, but I said exactly what is said in the Gita.

But it is not because you believe in your action that you ought to act; you act because you must act, that’s all. Only, it is a condition which can sometimes be a little dangerous from the external point of view, because instead of willing with a sovereign authority that the rain should stop, one looks on at what is happening. There we are. But I tell you, “If you like to pray, pray.”

We can pray now. (Laughter)

He is very witty!

Good, then, lights off. We shall pray.

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Mother reads from *The Synthesis of Yoga*, “Self-Consecration”.

Mother, one can make an offering of oneself only when one reaches quite a high level, but when one is leading a more or less unconscious life, the self-giving becomes more or less mental, doesn't it? And it is not effective. What should one do? Can one begin from the very beginning by self-giving?

It depends on people, my child.

There are people in whom the psychic movement, the emotional impulse is stronger than intellectual understanding. They feel an irresistible attraction for the Divine without knowing, without having the slightest idea of what it is, of what it can be, what it represents — nothing, no intellectual notion — but a kind of impulse, attraction, a need, an inevitable need.

And these people who have that, if, I may say as a result of the Grace, they have a mind which does not trouble them, does not question, does not discuss, go very fast.

And then, what is quite miraculous according to ordinary ideas is that as soon as they reach that degree of consecration which identifies them through their psychic being with the Divine Presence, suddenly they become endowed with capacities of expression absolutely unknown to their nature.

I had a case like this in France, a long time ago, of a young, very young girl who had never had any education so to say, any instruction; she was an Opera dancer, a very good one, and had been put to study there at the age of eight, as they are always put, that is, as a child; and she had learnt to dance instead of learning history, geography, mathematics and the rest. She almost did

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not know how to express herself, and her intelligence, though evident, was untrained. Well, she was attracted like that and felt an imperious need to seek the Divine, to consecrate herself to Him. And she began to dance in His honour at first, like the juggler of Notre Dame; and she truly danced most remarkably. And then, suddenly, she wanted to express what she was feeling: she began writing letters which were wonderfully poetic; she said surprising things and in a still more surprising way; page followed page, and she wrote all with an extraordinary facility.

It happened that, due to certain circumstances, she had some difficulties, there was something in her nature which pulled her back towards the old nature she had given up — which made her practical and materialistic, made her see things externally. And immediately she became incapable of putting two words together, she could not write a line without making numberless spelling mistakes.

When she was in the state of inspiration she wrote without a mistake, like a great writer; and as soon as she came out of that state and fell back into her down-to-earth consciousness — the needs of life, the necessities of each minute, etc. — everything disappeared, she could not even write a single line without making mistakes and it was totally unrefined stuff.

So you see, this proves that if one attains the true consciousness, there is no longer any problem to solve. What you have to be, you become. What you have to know, you know. And what you have to do, you have the power to do. And it naturally follows that all those so-called difficulties immediately vanish.

In the case I am speaking about, what pulled her down was not something in herself, it was in another person. And unfortunately that's what happens most often: one takes on in life the burden of certain responsibilities and they prevent him from advancing.

That's my story.

There are others who understand first, who are very intellectual, have studied, can play with words and ideas, who will give

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you brilliant lectures on all the philosophies, all the religions, all human conceptions and who, perhaps, will take years to advance one step. Because all that goes on in the head.

Many things go on in the head. I have told you this already several times, the head is like a public square. Anything at all can enter there, come, cross over, go out, and create a lot of disorder. And people who are in the habit of playing with ideas are the ones most hampered from going farther. It is a game that's pretty, attractive; it gives you the impression that you are not altogether ordinary, at the level of ordinary life, but it cuts the wings.

It's not the head which has wings: it's the heart. It's this... yes, this inevitable need. Nothing else counts. That's everything. Only that.

And so, after all, one doesn't care a rap for obstacles and difficulties. What can that do to you?... It doesn't count. One laughs at time also. What does it matter to you if it takes long? For a much longer time you will have the joy of aspiration, of consecration, of self-giving.

For this is the one true joy. And this joy fades away when there is something egoistic, and because there is a demand—which one calls a need—which is mixed in the consecration. Otherwise the joy never disappears.

This is the first thing one obtains, and the last one realises. And it is the sign of Victory.

So long as you can't be in joy, a constant, calm, peaceful, luminous, invariable joy, well, it means that you have still to work to purify yourself, and sometimes work hard. But this is the sign.

It is with the sense of separation that pain, suffering, misery, ignorance, and all incapacities have come. It is with an absolute self-giving, self-forgetfulness in a total consecration that suffering disappears and is replaced by a joy which nothing can veil.

And only when this joy is established here in this world can it be truly transformed and there be a new life, a new creation,

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a new realisation. The joy must first be established in the consciousness and then later the material transformation will take place; but not before.

Truly speaking, it is with the Adversary that suffering came into the world. And it's only joy which can vanquish him, nothing else — vanquish him definitively, finally.

(Long silence)

It is Delight which has created, and it is Delight which will accomplish.

(Silence)

Note that I am not speaking of what men call joy, which is not even a caricature, which, I think, is a diabolic invention in order to make one lose the way: the joy which comes from pleasure, from forgetfulness, from indifference.

(Silence)

I am speaking of a joy which is perfect peace, shadowless light, harmony, total beauty and an irresistible power, that joy which is the divine Presence itself, in its essence, in its Will and its Realisation.

Mother, you say that for conquering, it is only joy which can conquer the Adversary. But to attain the joy one must first conquer the Adversary!

Why no! One must go beyond him and ignore him.

There is one thing you must begin by doing, it is true, that is to free yourself from his influence. But there is a difference between freeing oneself from the Adversary's influence and conquering the Adversary. To conquer the Adversary is not a small

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thing. One must have a greater power than his to vanquish him. But one can liberate oneself totally from his influence. And from the minute one is completely free from his influence, one's self-giving can be total. And with the self-giving comes joy, long before the Adversary is truly vanquished and disappears.

The Adversary will disappear only when he is no longer necessary in the world. And we know very well that he is necessary, as the touch-stone for gold: to know if it is pure.

But if you, whoever it may be, become truly sincere — what I call sincere, you see, what Sri Aurobindo calls sincere, that is, when nothing in the being contradicts the aspiration and the will to consecration, nothing disguises itself to continue living its own independent life... The disguises are countless, they are full of craftiness and malice, very deceptive, and unfortunately the human being has a very great innate tendency to deceive himself; and the more one deceives himself, the less one recognises the self-deception. But if one is *really* sincere, the Adversary can't even approach him any longer; and he doesn't try it, because that would be courting his own destruction.

Only, some people have in them a kind of fighting instinct and they are not content to liberate themselves and come out of the influence; indeed they think they have the capacity to go to war and fight with the Adversary. So sometimes, if they are not quite ready, they go and land in very bad situations, difficult predicaments.

These are saved only by their trust in the divine Grace. Because, even if they act foolishly and land in difficult situations, there will always be something which comes and pulls them out of the hole at the last moment. A little like the mother cat catching its young one which is going to drown because it has made a mistake and wanted to walk upon water — she catches it, pulls it, brings it out. A little like that.

But it is always said that one must not tempt God. One should not do something through — how to put it sweetly — premature boldness, with the idea: “Oh, it doesn't matter, the

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Divine will always pull me out of the difficulty.” This is not good. Because instead of helping the work, it complicates it.

There we are. Is that all?

You want to try to be silent for a few minutes? I mean inside.

Yes?

(Meditation)

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Mother reads from *The Synthesis of Yoga*, “Self-Consecration”.

Sweet Mother, I haven't understood this paragraph very well.

Which paragraph?

“The powers of this world and their actual activities, it is felt, either do not belong to God at all or are for some obscure and puzzling cause, Maya or another, a dark contradiction of the divine Truth.”

It is a certain attitude which produces this. He says it earlier, doesn't he? He explains it. There is an attitude in which all material things appear to be not only not the expression of the Divine but incapable of becoming that and essentially opposed to the spiritual life. And so there is only one solution — it was that of the old Yogas, you know — the total rejection of life as not being able to participate in the spiritual life at all, the rejection of material life. This is what he explains. He says that with this attitude, that's how one looks at life. He does not say that it is like that; he says that one looks at it, considers it like that; that it is the attitude of those who have completely separated life from the spirit, and who say that life is an illusion, a falsification, and that it is incapable of expressing the Divine.

That's all?

Sweet Mother, “... we can ... enrich our realisation with the booty torn from the powers that oppose us.”

Yes.

What is this booty?

All the adverse forces at work in the world.

The world as it is today is in its greater part under the influence of the adverse forces. We call them adverse because they do not want the divine life; they oppose the divine life. They want things to remain as they are, because it is their field and their power in the world. They know very well that they will lose all power and all influence the moment the Divine manifests. So they are fighting openly and completely against the Divine, and we have to tear away from them bit by bit, little by little, all the things they have conquered in the outer life. And so when it is torn away from them, it is so much gained.

On the other hand, if, as was done formerly, we try what is called clearing the ground, that is, if we let go all the things we consider as not capable of being transformed, then it is so much lost for the divine realisation.

All the realisations of Nature in the outer life, all that it has created — for example upon earth all this vegetable and animal kingdom, you see, and this ordinary human world which it has created — if we give up all this as an illusion incapable of expressing the Divine, then this is so much left in the hands of the adverse forces which try to keep it, no doubt, for their own ends. Whereas if we consider that all this may be at present deformed but that in its essence and origin not only does it belong to the Divine but is the Divine Himself, then we can work consciously, deliberately at the transformation and wrest all these things from the hostile influence which now governs them.

That's all?... Still...?

Sweet Mother, what is our universal being?

Our universal being?... What it is?... I don't understand your

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question very well.

What is it? "For our entire nature and its environment, all our personal and all our universal self, are full of habits and of influences that are opposed to our spiritual rebirth..."

Our universal self is our relation with all others and all the movements of Nature.

And I have often told you, haven't I?, that the first state of your being is a state of an almost total mixture with all things from outside, and that there is almost no individualisation, that is, specialisation which makes you a different being. You are moved — a kind of form which is your physical being is moved — by all the common universal forces, vital forces or mental forces, which go through your form and put it in motion.

So that is the universal being.

And all that you have wrested from this general semi-consciousness, and have crystallised into a more or less independent being, conscious of itself and having its own qualities, all this is your individual being. And this individual being is full of all the movements of obscurity, unconsciousness, and of the limitations of ordinary life, and that's... and that's what you must gradually open to the divine influence and bring to the consciousness and understanding of things. That's what Sri Aurobindo says.

In fact, the first victory is to create an individuality. And then later, the second victory is to give this individuality to the Divine. And the third victory is that the Divine changes your individuality into a divine being.

There are three stages: the first is to become an individual; the second is to consecrate the individual, that he may surrender entirely to the Divine and be identified with Him; and the third is that the Divine takes possession of this individual and changes him into a being in His own image, that is, he too becomes divine.

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Generally, all the yogas stopped at the second. When one had succeeded in surrendering the individual and giving him without reserve to the Divine to be identified with Him, one considered that his work was finished, that all was accomplished.

But *we* begin there, and we say, “No, this is only a beginning. We want this Divine with whom we are identified to enter our individuality and make it into a divine personality acting in a divine world.” And this is what we call transformation. But the other precedes it, must precede it. If that is not done, there is no possibility of doing the third. One can’t go from the first to the third; one must pass through the second.

*Mother, the third depends entirely on the Divine,
whether He wills to take possession or not.*

In fact everything depends entirely on the Divine. It is only the consciousness you have of it which is different. So in the third stage, obviously, one becomes conscious that it is the Divine who does everything; so it depends entirely on the Divine.

When you say this, the part of your consciousness which is still convinced of its separation and its own existence is looking at the other and saying, “Ah, good! Now I shall no longer have to do anything.” But if it no longer exists, if it becomes conscious that it is the Divine, then it can’t have this impression. It does the work, continues to do it, but with the true consciousness, instead of having the distorted consciousness.

(Silence)

That’s all?

*Sweet Mother, how can one feel the divine Presence
constantly?*

Why not?

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But how can one do it?

But I am asking why one should not feel it. Instead of asking the question how to feel it, I ask the question: “What do you do that you don’t feel it?” There is no reason not to feel the divine Presence. Once you have felt it, even once, you should be capable of feeling it always, for it is there. It is a fact. It is only our ignorance which makes us unaware of it. But if we become conscious, why should we not always be conscious? Why forget something one has learnt? When one has had the experience, why forget it? It is simply a bad habit, that’s all.

You see, there is something which is a fact, that’s to say, it *is*. But we are unaware of it and do not know it. But after we become conscious and know it, why should we still forget it? Does it make sense? It’s quite simply because we are not convinced that once one has met the Divine one can’t forget Him any more. We are, on the contrary, full of stupid ideas which say, “Oh! Yes, it’s very well once like that, but the rest of the time it will be as usual.” So there is no reason why it may not begin again.

But if we know that... we did not know something, we were ignorant, then the moment we have the knowledge... I am sincerely asking how one can manage to forget. One might not know something, that is a fact; there are countless things one doesn’t know. But the moment one knows them, the minute one has the experience, how can one manage to forget? Within yourself you have the divine Presence, you know nothing about it — for all kinds of reasons, but still the chief reason is that you are in a state of ignorance. Yet suddenly, by a clicking of circumstances, you become conscious of this divine Presence, that is, you are before a fact — it is not imagination, it is a fact, it’s something which exists. Then how do you manage to forget it once you have known it?

But still this state of ignorance is in us.

Ah! And why? Because you are convinced that it is a normal state and that one can't do otherwise.

But the moment you know that it is an absolutely abnormal state, contrary to the Truth, how does it happen that it can be repeated? It is simply because you are not convinced. It's because when you have the experience of the divine Presence it seems to you something fabulous, miraculous and extraordinary, and almost abnormal. And so... "This sublime state — how can I keep it? It is absolutely contrary to my own existence." But this indeed is the stupidity. For this sublime state is the natural state, and it's what you constantly are that is not natural but a falsification, a deformation — you see, a state... which is not normal.

But to have the knowledge and live in the Truth — this indeed is the normal state. Then, how does it happen that once you have had it... it is over, the abnormal state disappears, you become normal and live in the Truth. Once one is in the Truth, how does one manage to come out of it again?

Quite simply it's that you have not entered totally into the Truth, and only one part of yourself has had the experience and the others don't yet have it; and then you don't remain in this part of yourself which had the experience and begin to live in other parts which do not have it yet; and all these parts must have this experience one after another.

This is the reply to my question, this is what you should have told me: why, it is because we are not made of a single piece and the piece which had the experience is not the only one in us and is not always there, it is replaced by all kinds of other pieces which have not yet had the experience and must have it. That's why.

But truly speaking, it is not inevitable. Because even if the part which had the experience and knows is no longer right in front and master of the consciousness, if it is replaced by another part which is still in the ignorance, that's no reason for forgetting the other, for that other part is also yourself, and remains yourself, and is there. Why forget it? Why, when the

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obscure, unconscious and ignorant part comes up, why not put it immediately face to face with the other — like this — so that the other may show it that it is in the ignorance? This everybody can do. It's only a question of wanting it. We are not obliged to fall back into error, we are not obliged to fall back into obscurity, ignorance and stupidity.

It is because something in us, through cowardice or defeatism, accepts this. If one did not accept it, it wouldn't happen.

Even when everything seems to be suddenly darkened, the flame and the Light are always there. And if one doesn't forget them, one has only to put in front of them the part which is dark; there will perhaps be a battle, there will perhaps be a little difficulty, but it will be something quite transitory; never will you lose your footing.

That is why it is said — and it is something true — that to sin through ignorance may have fatal consequences, because when one makes mistakes, well, these mistakes have results, that's obvious, and usually external and material results; but that's no great harm, I have already told you this several times. But when one knows what is true, when one has seen and had the experience of the Truth, to accept the sin again, that is, fall back again into ignorance and obscurity — this is indeed an infinitely more serious mistake. It begins to belong to the domain of ill-will. In any case, it is a sign of slackness and weakness. It means that the will is weak.

So your question is put the other way round. Instead of asking yourself how to keep it, you must ask yourself: how does one not keep it? Not having it, is a state which everybody is in before the moment of knowing; not knowing — one is in that state before knowing. But once one knows one cannot forget. And if one forgets, it means that there is something which consents to the forgetting, it means there is an assent somewhere; otherwise one would not forget.

(Silence)

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That's all?...
That's all, nothing more?
No more questions anywhere?
You want to meditate? Yes?

(Meditation)

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Mother reads from *The Synthesis of Yoga*, “Self-Consecration”.

“Often he (the sadhak) finds that even after he has won persistently his own personal battle, he has still to win it over and over again...”

Yes. So?

Then does this mean that others profit by his sadhana?

You understand, it’s like that for everyone.

If there was only one, it could be like this: that he alone could do it for all; but if everybody does it... you understand...

You are fifty persons doing the Integral Yoga. If it is only one of the fifty who is doing it, then he does it for all the fifty. But if each one of the fifty is doing it, each doing it for all the fifty, he does it actually for one person alone, because all do it for all.

But the work is much longer?

One must widen oneself.

The work is more complicated, it is more complete, it asks for a greater power, a greater wideness, a greater patience, a greater tolerance, a greater endurance; all these things are necessary. But in fact, if each one does perfectly what he has to do, it is no longer only one single person who does the whole thing: not one single person who does it for all, but all now form only one person who does it for the whole group.

This ought to form a kind of sufficient unity among all those who are doing it, so that they no longer feel the distinction. This

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is indeed the ideal way of doing it: that they now form only one single body, one single personality, working at once each for himself and for the others without any distinction.

Truly speaking, it was the first question which came up when I met Sri Aurobindo. I think I have already told you this; I don't remember now, but I spoke about it recently. Should one do one's yoga and reach the goal and then later take up the work with others or should one immediately let all those who have the same aspiration come to him and go forward all together towards the goal?

Because of my earlier work and all that I had tried, I came to Sri Aurobindo with the question very precisely formulated. For the two possibilities were there: either to do an intensive individual sadhana by withdrawing from the world, that is, by no longer having any contact with others, or else to let the group be formed naturally and spontaneously, not preventing it from being formed, allowing it to form, and starting all together on the path.

Well, the decision was not at all a mental choice; it came spontaneously. The circumstances were such that there was no choice; that is, quite naturally, spontaneously, the group was formed in such a way that it became an imperious necessity. And so once we have started like that, it is finished, we have to go to the end like that.

At the beginning there were five, ten, not more. There were five or six for a long time. It became ten, twelve, about twenty; then thirty, thirty-five. That remained for quite a long while. And then suddenly, you know, it started; and then here we are! The last figure was more than eleven hundred. We are growing.

Now, among these there are many who do not do the sadhana, then the problem does not come up. But for all those who do it, it is like this, it is as Sri Aurobindo has described it here. And if one wants to do the thing in a solitary way, it is absolutely impossible to do it totally. For every physical being, however complete he may be, is only partial and limited; he

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represents only one law in the world; it can be a very complex law, but it is only one law; what is called in India, you know, the Dharma, one Truth, one Law.

Each individual being, even if he be of a completely higher kind, even if he is made for an absolutely special work, is only one individual being; that means, the totality of the transformation cannot take place through one single body. And that is why, spontaneously, the multiplication came about.

One can reach, alone and solitary, his own perfection. One can become in one's consciousness infinite and perfect. But when it is a question of a work, it is always limited.

I don't know if you understand me well. But personal realisation has no limits. One can become inwardly in himself perfect and infinite. But the outer realisation is necessarily limited, and if one wants to have a general action, at least a minimum number of physical beings is needed.

In a very old tradition it was said that twelve were enough; but in the complexities of modern life it doesn't seem possible. There must be a representative group. Which means that... you know nothing about it or you don't imagine it very well, but each one of you represents one of the difficulties which must be conquered for the transformation. And this makes many difficulties! (*Mother laughs*) I have written somewhere... I have said that, more than a difficulty, each one represents an impossibility to be solved. And it is the whole set of all these impossibilities which can be transformed into the Work, the Realisation. Each case is an impossibility to be solved, and it is when all these impossibilities are resolved that the Work will be accomplished.

But now I am more gentle. I take away "impossibility" and put "difficulty". Perhaps they are no longer impossibilities.

Only, from the beginning, and still more now that our group has grown so considerably, each time someone comes to tell me, "I come for *my* yoga", I say, "Oh, no! Then don't come. It is much more difficult here than anywhere else." And the reason is what Sri Aurobindo has written here.

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If someone comes to tell me, “I come to work, I come to make myself useful”, it is all right. But if someone comes and says, “I have many difficulties outside, I can’t manage to overcome these difficulties, I want to come here because it will help me”, I say, “No, no, it will be *much* more difficult here; your difficulties will increase *considerably*.” And that is what it means, because they are no longer isolated difficulties; they are collective difficulties.

So in addition to your own personal difficulty you have all the frictions, all the contacts, all the reactions, all the things which come from outside. As a test. Exactly on the weak point, the thing that’s most difficult to solve; it is there that you will hear from someone the phrase which was just the one you did not want to hear; someone will make towards you that gesture which was exactly the one which could shock you; you find yourself facing a circumstance, a movement, a fact, an object, anything at all — just the things which... “Ah, how I should have liked this not to happen!” And it’s that which will happen. And more and more. Because you do not do your yoga for yourself alone. You do the yoga for everybody — without wanting to — automatically.

So when people come and tell me, “I come here for peace, quietness, leisure, to do my yoga”, I say, “No, no, no! Go away immediately somewhere else, you will be much more peaceful anywhere else than here.”

If someone comes and says, “Well, here I am, I feel that I should consecrate myself to the divine Work, I am ready to do any work at all that you give me”, then I say, “Good, that’s all right. If you have goodwill, endurance, and some capacity, it is all right. But to find the solitude necessary for your inner development it is better to go somewhere else, *anywhere else*, but not here.” There we are.

I said all this just today; I had the occasion to do so. And at the same time I said, “There is an exception to this rule: that’s the children.” Because here the children have the advantage of living

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from the time when they are still unconscious, in an atmosphere which helps them to find themselves. And this one doesn't have outside. I am saying what I just said to people who are... not necessarily old but still... formed, who are past the age not only of childhood but of their first youth.

But all those who are quite small, the younger they are, the better it is for them — because from their young and most tender childhood they are in the most favourable atmosphere for an integral development, and so they can grow up, develop more and more in the right atmosphere. It is only when one comes out of the personal development and wants to begin to do the yoga that the problem comes up. But for those who have been entirely brought up here, the problem is much less difficult, because from their very first childhood they have already been members of a whole, without knowing it, without being aware of it; and they move with the whole towards the Realisation. So it is no longer something absolutely new, which adds to the difficulty; on the contrary it is something that helps them.

Now, you see, when the problem comes up, it is for them to know whether they want to do the yoga or not. I have already told you this several times. You see, a moment comes when... “Well, now I am going out into life to have my experience.” — “Go, my children, with my blessings; and try to see that it is not too unpleasant.” (*Mother laughs*) But those who say, “No, now I have taken my decision, I want to do yoga”, then, well, I don't hide it from them that the difficulty begins. From this moment, special qualities are necessary; and they must know how to profit by all the preparation that has been given to them. They are in a better position than the poor people who come from outside; much better! But all the same they will have to make an effort, because without effort nothing succeeds — unless they have learnt from the time they were very small to let themselves be carried. But there are very few who are mature enough, it can be said, or old enough, in the sense of eternity, to be able to allow themselves to be carried all at

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once, like that, at a single go, without needing to receive all the blows from outside in order to know that *this* is the true thing.

This depends a great deal on what they are within themselves. Here, really, comes in the question of the predestined one, the one born for this. Then indeed it is much easier.

There we are.

Sweet Mother, do you think that we make enough effort for the chance you have given us?

Ah! This, my child, is an affair between you and your own conscience. It is not I who shall say anything at all about it. I cannot answer this. This is for you to observe.

Oh, it is quite obvious that if each one of you could see this in the true light...

I don't know if you have had this experience, when reading one of the wonderful stories of mankind, and of those who came to help humanity — you have perhaps heard this more here in India than people in other countries — those stories in which there was an intervention from above, there was one of those chances, one of those miraculous Graces.

And so, if one reads that when one is small, one says, "Oh, how I should like to have lived at that time!" — I don't know if you have had this experience...

I knew people who had it. And then one tells them, "Well, try to imagine that you have it, this chance, what would be your reaction?" And sometimes suddenly one perceives it; suddenly it seems as if the heavens were opened, and that something has come which was not there before. For how long, one can't say, but in any case, it is one of those extraordinary moments of earth-life and human life when things are not as they ordinarily are, dull and lifeless. So one has the feeling of living a miracle.

If one can keep this, all goes well. Unfortunately one forgets it very quickly.

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If one has had it once, it is already something; the door has been opened. Suddenly one has felt... yes, felt, it is something, it is an infinite Grace, it is something marvellous. All those who lived a century ago, two centuries ago, three centuries ago, hoped for it, awaited it. They had only one chance, that was to live again in a new life and in better conditions.

But now, we have these conditions, they are here: the Grace is here.

If one can manage to have the experience — not only a thought — the experience of the thing, and then keep it afterwards, then all becomes easy. Unfortunately, one forgets very soon.

Sweet Mother, here Sri Aurobindo has said: "He [the sadhak of the integral Yoga] has not only to conquer in himself the forces of egoistic falsehood and disorder, but to conquer them as representatives of..."

Listen, my child, I am sorry, but you don't listen when I am speaking? This was exactly Tara's question and I have explained everything to her. Then how do you ask a similar question?

You did not understand? I have explained everything.

(Silence)

Mother, you said that each one represents an impossibility. In this case, each one should concentrate on solving this impossibility, shouldn't he?

Not necessarily concentrate on that. But he has to face it, whether he knows it or not — an aspect of the problem.

I have already said this once. When you represent the possibility of a victory, you always have within you the thing contrary to this victory, which is your perpetual trouble.

21 December 1955

Each one has his own difficulty. And I have given the example already once, I think. For instance, a being who must represent fearlessness, courage, you know, a capacity to hold on without giving way before all dangers and all fights, usually somewhere in his being he is a *terrible* coward, and he has to struggle against this almost constantly because this represents the victory he has to win in the world.

It is like a being who ought to be good, full of compassion and generosity; somewhere in his being he is sharp, sour and sometimes even bad; and he has to struggle against this in order to be the other thing. And so on. It goes into *all* the details. It's like that.

And when you see a very black shadow somewhere, *very* black, something that's truly painful, you know, you can be sure that you have in you the possibility of the corresponding light.

Why does it increase instead of diminishing?

What does that mean, "it increases"?

(The disciple can't answer.)

Here it increases? Yes. Because this is the place of the Realisation.

In life you are unconscious, you pass all your life in an absolutely vague semi-consciousness, you know nothing about yourself, except just an appearance, nothing more. And you will always be incapable of fulfilling your mission and therefore you do not meet the obstacle in the heart of the difficulty, only an appearance; you are all in the midst of appearances. It's simply that. So your faults are small, your virtues are small, your capacities are mediocre and your difficulties are mediocre, you are entirely mediocre, constantly.

It is only when you begin to walk on the path of Realisation that your possibilities become real, and your difficulties become much greater — quite naturally. Things become intensified.

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This is why I tell people, “If you can’t find peace and solitude in yourself, can’t isolate yourself sufficiently to enter within yourself, if you can’t do this in the conditions of ordinary life, it is certainly not here that you will be able to do it, because your first difficulty will be that you will feel invaded by everything and everybody, and will be absolutely unable to isolate yourself. If you have learnt to do it before coming here, then it will be good. But if you don’t know how to do it, you will find it very difficult to do so here.”

And for everything it is the same way. People who are ill-natured, those who have no control over their anger, for instance, are much worse here than in the ordinary world, because in the ordinary world they are controlled by all the necessities of life and because, for example, when they go to an office, if they get into a temper against the boss, they are thrown out. While here, we don’t throw them out; they are simply told, “Try to control yourself.”

28 December 1955

Mother reads from *The Synthesis of Yoga*, “Self-Consecration”.

*Sweet Mother, what is “an all-receiving concentration that is the very nature of the integral Yoga”?
An all-receiving concentration?*

No — a concentration which is open to all that exists; it is a concentration which does not oppose anything. It is a concentration which is open. It means that one must not reject certain things from himself and practise an exclusive concentration on a particular point while neglecting all the others. All the possibilities should be admitted and pursued.

Here it is written: “Our one objective must be the Divine himself to whom, knowingly or unknowingly, something always aspires in our secret nature.”

What is this something which aspires, Sweet Mother?

It is a part of the being which is not always the same in everyone, and which is instinctively open to the influence of the psychic.

There is always one part — sometimes indeed quite veiled, of which we are not conscious — something in the being which is turned to the psychic and receiving its influence. This is the intermediary between the psychic consciousness and the external consciousness.

It is not the same thing in everyone; in each one it is different. It is the point in his nature or character through which he can touch the psychic and where he can receive the psychic influence. It depends upon people; for each one it is different; everyone has a point like this.

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You may also feel that there are certain things which suddenly push you, lift you above yourself, open a kind of door upon something greater. It can be many things; and it depends upon each one's nature. It's the part of the being which enthuses over something; it is this capacity for enthusiasm.

There are two principal things. This, the capacity for enthusiasm which makes one come out of his greater or lesser inertia in order to throw himself more or less totally into the thing which rouses him. As for instance, the artist for his art, the scientist for his science. And in general, every person who creates or builds has an opening, the opening of a special faculty, a special possibility, creating an enthusiasm in him. When this is active, something in the being awakens, and there is a participation of almost the whole being in the thing done.

There is this. And then there are those who have an innate faculty of gratitude, those who have an ardent need to respond, respond with warmth, devotion, joy, to something which they feel like a marvel hidden behind the whole of life, behind the tiniest little element, the least little event of life, who feel this sovereign beauty or infinite Grace which is behind all things.

I knew people who had no knowledge, so to say, of anything, who were hardly educated, whose minds were altogether of the ordinary kind, and who had in them this capacity of gratitude, of warmth, which gives itself, understands and is thankful.

Well, for them, the contact with the psychic was very frequent, almost constant and, to the extent that they were capable of it, conscious — not very conscious but a little — in the sense that they felt that they were carried, helped, uplifted above themselves.

These two things prepare people the most. They are born with one or the other; and if they take the trouble, it develops gradually, it increases.

We say: the capacity for enthusiasm, something which throws you out of your miserable and mean little ego; and the

generous gratitude, the generosity of the gratitude which also flings itself in thanksgiving out of the little ego. These are the two most powerful levers to enter into contact with the Divine in one's psychic being. This serves as a link with the psychic being — the surest link.

(Silence)

That's all?

Sweet Mother, does something aspire even in the most nasty people?

In the most nasty people?... yes, my child — even in the Asuras, even in the Adversaries, even in the monsters, there is something.

There is always a corner, a kind of rift, a sensitive point, which is usually called a weakness. But this actually is the strength of the being, the point by which it can be touched.

For even in the most obscure and misled beings, even in those whose conscious will is to fight against the Divine, in spite of themselves, in spite of everything, their origin is divine. And they work in vain, try in vain to cut themselves off from their origin; they cannot do it. Deliberately, consciously, they try all they can; but they know very well they cannot do it. Even the most monstrous being there is always a means to touch.

The Divine, the Divine's action in the world, always acts as a limit to the excess of evil, and at the same time gives an unlimited power to the good. And it is this unlimited power of the good which, externally, in the manifestation, serves as a limit to the spreading of evil.

Naturally, to the very limited vision of human beings it seems sometimes that evil has no limits and that it goes to its extreme. But this extreme itself is a limit. There is always a halt, because there is a point where the Divine rises up and says, "You won't go any farther." Whether it be the great destructions of

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Nature or men's monstrosities, there is *always* a moment when the Divine intervenes and prevents things from going farther.

(Long silence)

Sweet Mother, do those who have this aspiration without knowing it also progress without knowing it?

Yes — yes.

Then everybody is progressing, always, isn't that so?

In a certain way, yes. Only it may not be apparent in one lifetime, because when there is no conscious participation of the being, the movement is relatively slow, even relative to the short duration of human life. And so it is quite possible, for example, that at the moment of death a being seems not to have progressed, and even sometimes it seems to have been going backwards, to have lost what it had at the beginning of its life. But if we take the great life-curve of its psychic being through many lives, there is always a progress. Each experience it had in one of its physical lifetimes helps it to make some progress. But it is the psychic being which always progresses.

The physical being, in the state in which it is at present — well, having reached a certain point of ascent, it comes down again. There are elements which may not come down again grossly; but still it does come down, one can't deny it.

The vital being — not necessarily, nor the mental being. The vital being, if it knows how to get connected with the universal force, can very easily have no retrogression; it can continue to ascend. And the mental being, it's absolutely certain, is completely free from all degeneration if it continues to develop normally. So these always make progress so long as they remain co-ordinated and under the influence of the psychic.

It is only the physical being which grows and decomposes.

But this comes from its lack of plasticity and receptivity and by its very nature; it is not inevitable. Therefore there is room to think that at a given moment, as the physical consciousness itself progresses consciously and deliberately, well, to a certain extent and increasingly the body itself will be able, first to resist decay — which, obviously, must be the first movement — and then gradually begin to grow in inner perfection till it overcomes the forces of decomposition.

But truly speaking, it's the only thing which for the moment does not progress. Everything else is progressing.

But this substance *itself* — that is, this material physical substance which forms it constitutes an organism which lives for a certain length of time in a given form and then this form declines and dissolves — the substance itself constituting these successive forms progresses through all these forms. That is, the molecular, cellular substance — perhaps even the cellular — the molecular and atomic, is progressing in its capacity to express the divine Force and Consciousness. Through all these organisms this substance becomes more and more conscious, more and more luminous, more and more receptive, until it reaches a perfection sufficient for it to become a possible vehicle for the divine Force itself which will be able to use it as it uses the elements of the other parts of the creation, like the mind or the vital.

And at that moment the physical substance will be ready to manifest in the world the new Consciousness, new Light, new Will. Through all the centuries, through countless lives, passing through innumerable organisms, using countless experiences it, so to speak, becomes refined; it is prepared, and becomes more and more receptive and open to the divine Forces.

So, a man as a momentary individual being may not appear to progress. But the progress is continued through him, as through all organisms.

(*Silence*)

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(To a child) You seem to think that it is not very consoling!

All the same it is a consolation, because, in fact, it is only for each individual being to precipitate the movement of progress by working consciously at it. That freedom is given to everyone, so one has only to profit by it.

There is no ineluctable law preventing anybody from participating consciously in the universal progress. This freedom is given to him.

Nothing?... No questions, then?...

No more questions?... Nothing?... Nothing more?... *(To a child)* Or you have something to ask?

Sweet Mother, when one sees in one's dream a white snake with two heads, what does it signify?

It depends on the context.

It is difficult to say. Logically it should mean purified energy.

Two heads; it depends on the context, that means, the circumstances in which one sees, what has happened before, what happens at that time and what happens afterwards. If it is just a snake like that, with two heads...

It was in this room, Sweet Mother. I don't know who was there, but in Gauri's drawer, here, there was the snake, and as soon as I opened it, it came out. Then you took it by the tail, and it bit you — but that did nothing. Then you let it go out by the other window.

It was white?

Yes.

And had two heads?

Yes.

28 December 1955

(Silence)

You are sure that it bit me?

I don't know.

Still, you remember it like that.

Yes.

In which drawer?

Here, Sweet Mother, where you keep the flowers.

In the box?

Yes.

(Silence)

I threw it out?

Not threw it, but you let it go out from there. You put it on the window and it went out.

Absolutely white?

I think so.

The eyes? You didn't see them?

I don't know.

When did this happen?

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Two or three days ago, I think.

Good.

So, meditation?

(Meditation)

Note on the Text

These talks of 1955 were spoken by the Mother in French and appear here in English translation. All of them were tape-recorded. Passages from some of the talks were published in the French original together with an English translation in issues of the *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education* from 1955 to 1960. The first five months of talks were serialised in the *Bulletin* from November 1978 to November 1980. In 1979 all the talks were brought out in English under the title *Questions and Answers 1955* as Volume 7 of the *Collected Works of the Mother* (first edition). In that volume previous *Bulletin* translations were slightly revised and the remaining talks translated for the first time. The present volume has the same text as the first edition of the *Collected Works*, apart from some minor revisions of the translation.