

25 January 1956

*“Life, not a remote silent or high-uplifted ecstatic Beyond — Life alone, is the field of our Yoga. The transformation of our superficial, narrow and fragmentary human way of thinking, seeing, feeling and being into a deep and wide spiritual consciousness and an integrated inner and outer existence and of our ordinary human living into the divine way of life must be its central purpose.”*

*Sri Aurobindo, The Synthesis of Yoga, SABCL, Vol 20, p. 82*

*Sweet Mother, will “the divine way of life” be established on earth only when the Supermind descends?*

I think so. There seems to be no possibility of its happening other-wise. But it is a very relative question. Perhaps our way of life could become a little more divine without becoming altogether divine.

*What do you mean by a “divine way of life”?*

We always call “Divine” all that we are not but wish to be. All that seems to us infinitely superior, not only to all that we have done, but to all that we feel we can do; all that surpasses both our conception and our present possibilities, we call “Divine”.

I say this, not as a joke, but because I am quite convinced that if we go back some thousands of years, when men spoke of the Divine — if ever they did speak of the Divine, as I believe — they spoke perhaps of a state like that of the godheads of the Overmind; and now this mode of being of the Overmind godheads who, obviously, have governed the earth and formed many things on earth for a very long time, seems to us far inferior

## Questions and Answers

to what we conceive the Supermind to be. And this Supermind, which is, precisely, what we now call the Divine and try to bring down on earth, will probably strike us in the same way a few thousand or million years hence as the Overmind does today.

And I am sure that in the manifestation, that is, in His self-expression, the Divine is progressive. Outside the manifestation He is something we cannot conceive; but as soon as He manifests in this kind of perpetual becoming, well, He manifests more and more of Himself, as though He were reserving for the end the most beautiful things in His Being.

As the world progresses, what He expresses in the world becomes what we might call more and more divine.

So Sri Aurobindo has used the word Supermind to explain to those who are in the outer and evolutionary consciousness and who have some idea of the way in which the earth has developed — to explain to them that this something which is going to be beyond all this, and superior to human creation, to man, whom he always calls the mental being — this something which is going to come will be greater and better than man; and so he calls it supramental in order to make himself understood. But we could just as well say that it is something more divine than what has been manifested before.

And this he himself says, in what I read today, that it is infinite, that it has no limits.<sup>1</sup> That is to say, there will always be a growing perfection; and what now seems to us imperfect must have been the perfection for which certain ages in earth's history aspired.

There is no reason why this should stop. If it stopped, it would be finished. It would be a new Pralaya.

*Mother, I have not understood this: "It is for this meaningful development of consciousness by thought, will,*

<sup>1</sup> "In a certain sense it may be an error to speak of a goal anywhere in a progression which may well be infinite."

Sri Aurobindo, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, SABCL, Vol. 20, p. 83

25 January 1956

*emotion, desire, action and experience, leading in the end to a supreme divine self-discovery, that Man, the mental being, has entered into the material body.”*

*The Synthesis of Yoga, pp. 82–83*

Why has the mental being taken a material body? Is that what you are asking?

*Sri Aurobindo says, “leading in the end to a supreme divine self-discovery”.*

The divine discovery is the discovery of the Divine in oneself. So man, that is, the mental being—for what we call man is a physical body with a mental being within, a mental being manifested in a body, a physical body—so the mental being has incarnated and become man in order to find within himself the divine Being, the divine Presence.

Why? Are you asking why? It’s a funny way of going about it! (*Laughter*)

I don’t know if he is going to explain it here, I don’t remember now, but one thing is certain, that this marvellous thing, the divine Presence in Matter, which is at the origin of the formation of the psychic being, belongs in its own right to life on earth.

So—we have already said this many times, I believe—our earth which from the astronomical point of view seems to be only a small insignificant planet in the midst of all the stars and all the worlds, our earth has been formed to become the symbol of the universe and the point of concentration for the work of transformation, of divine transmutation.

And because of that, in this Matter which was perhaps the most obscure and most inconscient of all the Matter of the universes, there plunged and incarnated directly the Divine Consciousness, from the supreme Origin right into the obscurest Matter, without going through any intermediate stages, *directly*.

## Questions and Answers

Consequently, the two extremes touch, the Supreme and the most inconscient, and the universal circle closes. And so earthly life is the easiest means, one might say, or the most rapid, of becoming conscious of the Divine.

And it is so true that even the great cosmic Individualities, when they want to be converted or to unite with the Origin, take a physical body for that, because it is more convenient for them, for it can be done faster and better than if they had to progress through all the states of being, from any one of the states of being in the universe to the supreme Origin.

It is easier to come down into a human body and find the divine Presence there, it is quicker. Imagine the serpent biting its tail, it makes a circle, doesn't it? So, if something wants to be united with the Divine, it is easier to enter the tail than to go the whole round of the body! As the head bites the tail, well, if you enter the tail you are immediately in contact with the head, otherwise you have to go all the way round to reach the head.

*(To the child)* Mind you, I am not quite sure if this is what he means, but any way it is one explanation.

*(Silence)*

Mother shows the white Champak flower she is holding in her hand. She has named the flower "Psychological Perfection".

Who remembers this?

*(Counting the petals)* One, two, three, four, five psychological perfections. What are the five psychological perfections?

For they can be changed. And in fact, to tell you my secrets, every time I give it to someone, they are not always the same psychological perfections. That depends on people's needs. Even to the same person I may give at different times different psychological perfections; so it's not fixed. But the first time this flower was named "Psychological Perfection" (I remember very

25 January 1956

well it was at a gathering up there where Prosperity<sup>2</sup> now is, where I go on the first of the month; there was a gathering and we had decided the five psychological perfections), at that time they were noted down, but as for me it is something very fluid — I told you it depends on the circumstances and needs — I don't remember what was chosen the first time.

So, if someone knows it, he can tell us, we'll compare.

*I am not sure.*

You are not sure. Is there anyone who is sure?

*Aspiration, devotion, sincerity and faith.*

That makes only four, so far.

*And surrender.*

Surrender? Someone told me something else.

(*To a disciple*) You, do you know? Well, then, come and tell us.

*In English, Mother?*

Ah, no, my child, this is a French class, not in English!

*Faith, sincerity, aspiration, devotion, surrender.*

But that's what he just said. (*Turning to another disciple*) You — a little while ago, you told me "faithfulness".

*I said that, but it's not faithfulness, instead of faithfulness it's faith.*

<sup>2</sup> "Prosperity" is the place where, on the first of every month, Mother used to distribute to the disciples what they needed for the month.

## Questions and Answers

But why should there not be faithfulness? I didn't put it down, because I didn't try to recall anything, I simply wrote down what seemed to me the most important and most general. But it may be put in various ways.

In any case, what is always there, in all combinations and to whomever I give it, the first among them all is sincerity. For if there is no sincerity, one cannot advance even by half a step. So that is the first, and it is always there.

But it is possible to translate it by another word, if you prefer it, which would be "transparency". I shall explain this word:

Someone is in front of me and I am looking at him; I look into his eyes. And if this person is sincere or "transparent", through his eyes I go down and I see his soul—clearly. But—this is precisely the experience—when I look at somebody and see a little cloud, then I continue, I see a screen, and then sometimes it is a wall, and afterwards it is something quite black; and all this must be crossed, and holes bored in order to go through; and even then I am not sure if at the last minute I may not find myself before a door of bronze so thick that I shall never get through and see his soul; so, of such a person I can immediately say that he is not sincere. But I can also say, figuratively, that he is not transparent. That is the first thing.

There is a second, which is obviously, as indispensable if you want to go forward; it is to have faith. Or another word, which seems more limited but is for me more important, because (it is a question of experience) if your faith is not made of a complete trust in the Divine, well, you may very easily remain under the impression that you have faith and yet be losing all trust in the divine Power or divine Goodness, or the Trust the Divine has in you. These are the three stumbling-blocks:

Those who have what they call an unshakable faith in the Divine, and say, "It is the Divine who is doing everything, who can do everything; all that happens in me, in others, everywhere, is the work of the Divine and the Divine alone", if they follow

25 January 1956

this with some kind of logic, after some time they will blame the Divine for all the most terrible wrongs which take place in the world and make of Him a real demon, cruel and frightful — if they have no trust.

Or again, they do have faith, but tell themselves, “Well, I have faith in the Divine, but this world, I see quite well what it’s like! First of all, I suffer so much, don’t I? I am very unhappy, far more unhappy than all my neighbours” — for one is always far more unhappy than all one’s neighbours — “I am very unhappy and, truly, life is cruel to me. But then the Divine is divine, He is All-Goodness, All-Generosity, All-Harmony, so how is it that I am so unhappy? He must be powerless; otherwise being so good how could He let me suffer so much?”

That is the second stumbling-block.

And the third: there are people who have what may be called a warped and excessive modesty or humility and who tell themselves, “Surely the Divine has thrown me out, I am good for nothing, He can do nothing with me, the only thing for me is to give up the game, for He finds me unworthy of Him!”

So, unless one adds to faith a total and complete trust in the Divine Grace, there will be difficulties. So both are necessary....

Now, we have put “devotion” in this series. Yes, devotion is all very well, but unless it is accompanied by many other things it too may make many mistakes. It may meet with great difficulties.

You have devotion, and you keep your ego. And then your ego makes you do all sorts of things out of devotion, things which are terribly egoistic. That is to say, you think only of yourself, not of others, nor of the world, nor of the work, nor of what ought to be done — you think only of your devotion. And you become tremendously egoistic. And so, when you find out that the Divine, for some reason, does not answer to your devotion with the enthusiasm you expected of Him, you despair and fall back into the same three difficulties I was just speaking about: either the Divine is cruel — we have read that, there are many such stories, of enthusiastic devotees who abuse the Divine

## Questions and Answers

because He is no longer as gentle and near to them as before, He has withdrawn, “Why hast Thou deserted me? Thou hast abandoned me, O monster!...” They don’t dare to say this, but think it, or else they say, “Oh! I must have made such a serious mistake that I am thrown out”, and they fall into despair.

But there is another movement which should constantly accompany devotion.... That kind of sense of gratitude that the Divine exists; that feeling of a marvelling thankfulness which truly fills you with a sublime joy at the fact that the Divine exists, that there is something in the universe which is the Divine, that it is not just the monstrosity we see, that there is the Divine, the Divine exists. And each time that the least thing puts you either directly or indirectly in contact with this sublime Reality of divine existence, the heart is filled with so intense, so marvellous a joy, such a gratitude as of all things has the most delightful taste.

There is nothing which gives you a joy equal to that of gratitude. One hears a bird sing, sees a lovely flower, looks at a little child, observes an act of generosity, reads a beautiful sentence, looks at the setting sun, no matter what, suddenly this comes upon you, this kind of emotion — indeed so deep, so intense — that the world manifests the Divine, that there is something behind the world which is the Divine.

So I find that devotion without gratitude is quite incomplete, gratitude must come with devotion.

I remember that once we spoke of courage as one of the perfections; I remember having written it down once in a list. But this courage means having a taste for the supreme adventure. And this taste for supreme adventure is aspiration — an aspiration which takes hold of you completely and flings you, without calculation and without reserve and without a possibility of withdrawal, into the great adventure of the divine discovery, the great adventure of the divine meeting, the yet greater adventure of the divine Realisation; you throw yourself into the adventure without looking back and without asking for a single minute,



25 January 1956

“What’s going to happen?” For if you ask what is going to happen, you never start, you always remain stuck there, rooted to the spot, afraid to lose something, to lose your balance.

That’s why I speak of courage — but really it is aspiration. They go together. A real aspiration is something full of courage.

And now, surrender. In English the word is “surrender”, there is no French word which gives exactly that sense. But Sri Aurobindo has said — I think we have read this — that surrender is the first and absolute condition for doing the yoga. So, if we follow what he has said, this is not just one of the necessary qualities: it is the first attitude indispensable for beginning the yoga. If one has not decided to make a total surrender, one cannot begin.

But for this surrender to be total, all these qualities are necessary. And I add one more — for so far we have only four — I add endurance. For, if you are not able to face difficulties without getting discouraged and without giving up, because it is too difficult; and if you are incapable... well, of receiving blows and yet continuing, of “pocketing” them, as they say — when you receive blows as a result of your defects, of putting them in your pocket and continuing to go forward without flagging — you don’t go very far; at the first turning where you lose sight of your little habitual life, you fall into despair and give up the game.

The most... how shall I put it? the most material form of this is perseverance. Unless you are resolved to begin the same thing over again a thousand times if need be... You know, people come to me in despair, “But I thought it was done and now I must begin again!” And if they are told, “But that’s nothing, you will probably have to begin again a hundred times, two hundred times, a thousand times; you take one step forward and think you are secure, but there will always be something to bring back the same difficulty a little farther on. You think you have solved the problem, you must solve it yet once again; it will turn up again looking just a little different, but it will be the same problem”, and if you are not determined that: “Even

## Questions and Answers

if it comes back a million times, I shall do it a million times, but I shall go through with it”, well, you won’t be able to do the yoga. This is absolutely indispensable.

People have a beautiful experience and say, “Ah, now this is it!...” And then it settles down, diminishes, gets veiled, and suddenly something quite unexpected, absolutely commonplace and apparently completely uninteresting comes before you and blocks your way. And then you say, “Ah! what’s the good of having made this progress if it’s going to start all over again? Why should I do it? I made an effort, I succeeded, achieved something, and now it’s as if I had done nothing! It’s indeed hopeless.” For you have no endurance.

If one has endurance, one says, “It’s all right. Good, I shall begin again as often as necessary; a thousand times, ten thousand times, a hundred thousand times if necessary, I shall begin again — but I shall go to the end and nothing will have the power to stop me on the way.”

This is most necessary. Most necessary.

So here’s my proposal: we put surrender first, at the top of the list, that is, we accept what Sri Aurobindo has said — that to do the integral yoga one must first resolve to surrender entirely to the Divine, there is no other way, this is *the* way. But after that one must have the five psychological virtues, five psychological perfections, and we say that these perfections are:

Sincerity or Transparency

Faith or Trust (Trust in the Divine, naturally)

Devotion or Gratitude

Courage or Aspiration

Endurance or Perseverance.

One form of endurance is *faithfulness*, faithfulness to one’s resolution — being faithful. One has taken a resolution, one is faithful to one’s resolution. This is endurance.

There you are.

If one persists, there comes a time when one is victorious.

Victory is to the most persistent.