

## On Thoughts and Aphorisms

I could reply, “He said it like this because he saw it like this.” But, to begin with, one thing should be understood; these are definitions given by Sri Aurobindo, definitions which he gives mostly in a paradoxical form to compel us to think.

There are dictionary definitions, which are the ordinary explanations of words as they are commonly understood. These do not make you think. What Sri Aurobindo says, however, is said in order to break up the usual conception, to bring you in touch with a deeper truth. In this way a whole lot of questions are eliminated.

The effort one must make is to try to find the deeper knowledge, the deeper truth that Sri Aurobindo has expressed in this way, which is not the usual way of defining a word.

I shall select some questions: the first one, which interested me because it comes from a thoughtful person, concerns the word “knowledge” and compares the way Sri Aurobindo has used the word in this aphorism with the way he used it in the aphorism we read last week.

When, in last week’s aphorism, Sri Aurobindo opposed — as one might say — “knowledge” to “Wisdom”, he was speaking of knowledge as it is lived in the average human consciousness, the knowledge which is obtained through effort and mental development, whereas here, on the contrary, the knowledge he speaks of is the essential Knowledge, the supramental divine Knowledge, Knowledge by identity. And this is why he describes it here as “vast and eternal”, which clearly indicates that it is not human knowledge as we normally understand it.

Many people have asked why Sri Aurobindo said that the river is “slender”. This is an expressive image which creates a striking contrast between the immensity of the divine, supramental Knowledge — the origin of this inspiration, which is infinite — and what a human mind can perceive of it and receive from it. Even when you are in contact with these domains, the portion, so to say, which you perceive, is minimal, slender. It is like a tiny little stream or a few falling drops and these drops are so pure,