

Bhakti (Devotion)

Devotion is the key which opens the door to liberation.

The Mother

- 408 – I am not a Bhakta, for I have not renounced the world for God. How can I renounce what He took from me by force and gave back to me against my will? These things are too hard for me.
- 409 – I am not a Bhakta, I am not a Jnani, I am not a worker for the Lord. What am I then? A tool in the hands of my Master, a flute blown upon by the divine Herd-Boy, a leaf driven by the breath of the Lord.
- 410 – Devotion is not utterly fulfilled till it becomes action and knowledge. If thou pursuest after God and canst overtake Him, let Him not go till thou hast His reality. If thou hast hold of His reality, insist on having also His totality. The first will give thee divine knowledge, the second will give thee divine works and a free and perfect joy in the universe.
- 411 – Others boast of their love for God. My boast is that I did not love God; it was He who loved me and sought me out and forced me to belong to Him.
- 412 – After I knew that God was a woman, I learned something from far-off about love; but it was only when I became a woman and served my Master and Paramour that I knew love utterly.

On Thoughts and Aphorisms

Sri Aurobindo had a genius for humour and all we can do is admire and remain silent.

20 March 1970

What does Sri Aurobindo mean by: "How can I renounce what He took from me by force and gave back to me against my will?"

And also when he says: "After I knew that God was a woman..."?

I cannot answer because, while he was in his body, he never told me anything about this.

If anyone knows the exact date on which he wrote this, it might be an indication.

Perhaps N could tell you when this was written, or whether Sri Aurobindo told him anything about it.¹

413 – To commit adultery with God is the perfect experience for which the world was created.

I do not understand this aphorism.

This is the most perfect way in which Sri Aurobindo, with his marvellous sense of humour, could ridicule human morality. This sentence is a whole satire in itself.

21 March 1970

414 – To fear God really is to remove oneself to a distance from Him, but to fear Him in play gives an edge to utter delightfulness.

¹ According to the information given to Mother, these Aphorisms were written shortly after Sri Aurobindo's arrival in Pondicherry.

- 415 – The Jew invented the God-fearing man; India the God-knower and God-lover.
- 416 – The servant of God was born in Judaea, but he came to maturity among the Arabs. India's joy is in the servant-lover.
- 417 – Perfect love casts out fear; but still keep thou some tender shadow and memory of the exile and it will make the perfection more perfect.
- 418 – Thy soul has not tasted God's entire delight, if it has never had the joy of being His enemy, opposing His designs and engaging with Him in mortal combat.
- 419 – If you cannot make God love you, make Him fight you. If He will not give you the embrace of the lover, compel Him to give you the embrace of the wrestler.
- 420 – My soul is the captive of God, taken by Him in battle; it still remembers the war, though so far from it, with delight and alarm and wonder.

What does Sri Aurobindo mean by "the joy of being His enemy"?

Here too I have to say that I do not know exactly, because he never told me.

But I can tell you about my own experience. Until the age of about twenty-five, all I knew was the God of religions, God as men have created him, and I did not want him at any price. I denied his existence but with the certitude that if such a God did exist, I detested him.

When I was about twenty-five I discovered the inner God

On Thoughts and Aphorisms

and at the same time I learned that the God described by most Western religions is none other than the Great Adversary.

When I came to India, in 1914, and became acquainted with Sri Aurobindo's teaching, everything became very clear.

24 March 1970

421 – Most of all things on earth I hated pain till God hurt and tortured me; then it was revealed to me that pain is only a perverse and recalcitrant shape of excessive delight.

422 – There are four stages in the pain God gives to us; when it is only pain; when it is pain that causes pleasure; when it is pain that is pleasure; and when it is purely a fiercer form of delight.

423 – Even when one has climbed up into those levels of bliss where pain vanishes, it still survives disguised as intolerable ecstasy.

424 – When I was mounting upon ever higher crests of His joy, I asked myself whether there was no limit to the increase of bliss and almost I grew afraid of God's embraces.

I would like You to explain to me "the four stages of pain" which Sri Aurobindo speaks of here.

If Sri Aurobindo is speaking of moral pain, of any kind, I can say from experience that the four stages he mentions correspond to four states of consciousness which are the result of inner development and the degree of union with the divine consciousness which the individual consciousness has achieved. When the union is perfect, there only remains "a fiercer form of delight".

If it is the physical pain endured by the body, the experience does not follow such a clearly defined order; especially because union with the Divine most often causes the pain to disappear.

25 March 1970

425 – The next greatest rapture to the love of God, is the love of God in men; there, too, one has the joy of multiplicity.

426 – For monogamy may be the best for the body, but the soul that loves God in men dwells here always as the boundless and ecstatic polygamist; yet all the time — that is the secret — it is in love with only one being.

427 – The whole world is my seraglio and every living being and inanimate existence in it is the instrument of my rapture.

Someone who has experienced love for the Divine can no longer love anything but the Divine, and it is the Divine he loves in all those for whom he feels affection; besides, this is the best way to love, because in this way one can be a powerful help for others to become conscious of the Divine who manifests in them.

27 March 1970

428 – I did not know for some time whether I loved Krishna best or Kali; when I loved Kali, it was loving myself, but when I loved Krishna, I loved another, and still it was myself with whom I was in love. Therefore I came to love Krishna better even than Kali.

Sri Aurobindo always had his own way of saying things, always original and always unexpected.

29 March 1970

On Thoughts and Aphorisms

- 429 – What is the use of admiring Nature or worshipping her as a Power, a Presence and a goddess? What is the use, either, of appreciating her aesthetically or artistically? The secret is to enjoy her with the soul as one enjoys a woman with the body.
- 430 – When one has the vision in the heart, everything, Nature and Thought and Action, ideas and occupations and tastes and objects become the Beloved and are a source of ecstasy.

Nothing to say.

30 March 1970

- 431 – The philosophers who reject the world as Maya, are very wise and austere and holy; but I cannot help thinking sometimes that they are also just a little stupid and allow God to cheat them too easily.
- 432 – For my part, I think I have a right to insist on God giving Himself to me in the world as well as out of it. Why did He make it at all, if He wanted to escape that obligation?
- 433 – The Mayavadin talks of my Personal God as a dream and prefers to dream of Impersonal Being; the Buddhist puts that aside too as a fiction and prefers to dream of Nirvana and the bliss of nothingness. Thus all the dreamers are busy reviling each other's visions and parading their own as the panacea. What the soul utterly rejoices in, is for thought the ultimate reality.

434 – Beyond Personality the Mayavadin sees indefinable Existence; I followed him there and found my Krishna beyond in indefinable Personality.

As always, this is Sri Aurobindo's wonderful way of making clear to us the inanity of human assertions by which each one arrogantly denies anything that is not his own discovery or his own personal experience.

Wisdom begins with the capacity to admit all theories, even the most contradictory.

1 April 1970

435 – When I first met Krishna, I loved Him as a friend and playmate till He deceived me; then I was indignant and could not forgive Him. Afterwards I loved Him as a lover and He still deceived me; I was again and much more indignant, but this time I had to pardon.

436 – After offending, He forced me to pardon Him not by reparation, but by committing fresh offences.

437 – So long as God tried to repair His offences against me, we went on periodically quarrelling; but when He found out His mistake, the quarrelling stopped, for I had to submit to Him entirely.

438 – When I saw others than Krishna and myself in the world, I kept secret God's doings with me; but since I began to see Him and myself everywhere, I have become shameless and garrulous.

In his writings, Sri Aurobindo had a genius for expressing the most extraordinary experiences in the most ordinary words,

On Thoughts and Aphorisms

thus giving the impression that his experiences are simple and obvious.

2 April 1970

- 439 – All that my Lover has, belongs to me. Why do you abuse me for showing off the ornaments He has given to me?
- 440 – My Lover took His crown and royal necklace from His head and neck and clothed me with them; but the disciples of the saints and the prophets abused me and said, “He is hunting after Siddhis.”²
- 441 – I did my Lover’s commands in the world and the will of my Captor; but they cried, “Who is this corruptor of youth, this disturber of morals?”
- 442 – If I cared even for your praise, O ye saints, if I cherished my reputation, O ye prophets, my Lover would never have taken me into His bosom and given me the freedom of His secret chambers.
- 443 – I was intoxicated with the rapture of my Lover and I threw the robe of the world from me even in the world’s highways. Why should I care that the worldlings mock and the Pharisees turn their faces?
- 444 – To thy lover, O Lord, the railing of the world is wild honey and the pelting of stones by the mob is summer rain on the body. For is it not Thou that railest and peltest, and is it not Thou in the stones that strikest and hurtest me?

² Occult powers.

There is nothing to say. One can only bow before the perfection of the experience.

3 April 1970

445 – There are two things in God which men call evil, that which they cannot understand at all and that which they misunderstand and, possessing, misuse; it is only what they grope after half-vainly and dimly understand that they call good and holy. But to me all things in Him are lovable.

446 – They say, O my God, that I am mad because I see no fault in Thee; but if I am indeed mad with Thy love, I do not wish to recover my sanity.

447 – “Errors, falsehoods, stumblings!” they cry. How bright and beautiful are Thy errors, O Lord! Thy falsehoods save Truth alive; by Thy stumblings the world is perfected.

448 – Life, Life, Life, I hear the passions cry; God, God, God, is the soul’s answer. Unless thou seest and lovest Life as God only, then is Life itself a sealed joy to thee.

449 – “He loves her,” the senses say; but the soul says, “God, God, God.” That is the all-embracing formula of existence.

In this way Sri Aurobindo reveals and formulates the secret of existence. All that remains is to understand and live it.

4 April 1970

On Thoughts and Aphorisms

- 450 – If thou canst not love the vilest worm and the foulest of criminals, how canst thou believe that thou hast accepted God in thy spirit?
- 451 – To love God, excluding the world, is to give Him an intense but imperfect adoration.
- 452 – Is love only a daughter or handmaid of jealousy? If Krishna loves Chandrabali,³ why should I not love her also?
- 453 – Because thou lovest God only, thou art apt to claim that He should love thee rather than others; but this is a false claim contrary to right and the nature of things. For He is the One, but thou art of the many. Rather become one in heart and soul with all beings, then there will be none in the world but thou alone for Him to love.
- 454 – My quarrel is with those who are foolish enough not to love my Lover, not with those who share His love with me.
- 455 – In those whom God loves, have delight; on those whom He pretends not to love, take pity.

This is the most charming criticism one can make of jealousy and also the best way to cure it by overcoming the limits of the ego and by uniting with the Divine Love which is eternal and universal.

6 April 1970

³ Sri Krishna loved Radha best among the *gopis*, but he loved Chandrabali and the other *gopis* also.

- 456 – Dost thou hate the atheist because he does not love God? Then shouldst thou be disliked because thou dost not love God perfectly.
- 457 – There is one thing especially in which creeds and churches surrender themselves to the devil, and that is in their anathemas. When the priest chants Anathema Maranatha, then I see a devil praying.⁴
- 458 – No doubt, when the priest curses, he is crying to God; but it is the God of anger and darkness to whom he devotes himself along with his enemy; for as he approaches God, so shall God receive him.
- 459 – I was much plagued by Satan, until I found that it was God who was tempting me; then the anguish of him passed out of my soul for ever.
- 460 – I hated the devil and was sick with his temptations and tortures; and I could not tell why the voice in his departing words was so sweet that when he returned often and offered himself to me, it was with sorrow I refused him. Then I discovered it was Krishna at His tricks and my hate was changed into laughter.
- 461 – They explained the evil in the world by saying that Satan had prevailed against God; but I think more proudly of my Beloved. I believe that nothing is done but by His will in heaven or hell, on earth or on the waters.

In the Supreme, opposites are reconciled and complement each other. It is division in the manifestation which has made them

⁴ Alternative reading: devil worshipper.

On Thoughts and Aphorisms

into opposites; but once one's consciousness is united to the Divine Consciousness, opposition disappears.

7 April 1970

462 – In our ignorance we are like children proud of our success in walking erect and unaided and too eager to be aware of the mother's steadying touch on the shoulder. When we wake, we look back and see that God was leading and upholding us always.

463 – At first whenever I fell back into sin, I used to weep and rage against myself and against God for having suffered it. Afterwards it was as much as I could dare to ask, "Why hast thou rolled me again in the mud, O my playfellow?" Then even that came to my mind to seem too bold and presumptuous; I could only get up in silence, look at him out of the corner of my eyes — and clean myself.

So long as man prides himself on his virtue, the Supreme Lord will make him fall into sin to teach him the necessity of modesty.

8 April 1970

464 – God has so arranged life that the world is the soul's husband; Krishna its divine paramour. We owe a debt of service to the world and are bound to it by a law, a compelling opinion, and a common experience of pain and pleasure, but our heart's worship and our free and secret joy are for our Lover.

465 – The joy of God is secret and wonderful; it is a mystery and a rapture at which common sense makes mouths of mockery; but the soul that has once tasted it, can

never renounce, whatever worldly disrepute, torture and affliction it may bring us.

For the moment, the world still seems to be in contradiction with the pure and luminous divine joy; but a day will come when the world too will manifest this joy. This is what we must prepare it for.

9 April 1970

466 – God, the world Guru, is wiser than thy mind; trust Him and not that eternal self-seeker and arrogant sceptic.

467 – The sceptic mind doubts always because it cannot understand, but the faith of the God-lover persists in knowing although it cannot understand. Both are necessary to our darkness, but there can be no doubt which is the mightier. What I cannot understand now, I shall some day master, but if I lose faith and love, I fall utterly from the goal which God has set before me.

468 – I may question God, my guide and teacher, and ask Him, “Am I right or hast Thou in thy love and wisdom suffered my mind to deceive me?” Doubt thy mind, if thou wilt, but doubt not that God leads thee.

Life is given to us to find the Divine and unite with Him.

The mind tries to persuade us that it is not so. Shall we believe this liar?

10 April 1970

469 – Because thou wert given at first imperfect conceptions about God, now thou ragest and deniest Him. Man, dost thou doubt thy teacher because he gave not thee

On Thoughts and Aphorisms

the whole of knowledge at the beginning? Study rather that imperfect truth and put it in its place, so that thou mayst pass on safely to the wider knowledge that is now opening before thee.

470 – This is how God in His love teaches the child soul and the weakling, taking them step by step and withholding the vision of His ultimate and yet unattainable mountain-tops. And have we not all some weakness? Are we not all in His sight but as little children?

471 – This I have seen that whatever God has withheld from me, He withheld in His love and wisdom. Had I grasped it then, I would have turned some great good into a great poison. Yet sometimes when we insist, He gives us poison to drink that we may learn to turn from it and taste with knowledge His ambrosia and His nectar.

When man becomes a little wiser, he will not complain about anything and will take the things the Divine sends him as a manifestation of His all-compassionate Grace.

The more surrendered we are, the more we shall understand.
The more grateful we are, the happier we shall be.

11 April 1970

472 – Even the atheist ought now to be able to see that creation marches towards some infinite and mighty purpose which evolution in its very nature supposes. But infinite purpose and fulfilment presupposes an infinite wisdom that prepares, guides, shapes, protects and justifies. Revere then that Wisdom and worship it with thoughts in thy soul if not with incense in a temple, and even though thou deny it the heart of infinite Love and the mind of infinite self-effulgence. Then though thou

know it not, it is still Krishna whom thou reverest and worshippest.

Beyond words, beyond thoughts, the Supreme Presence makes itself felt and compels our wonder.

Let us beware of all mental constructions that limit and distort. Let us strive to keep the contact pure.

12 April 1970

473 – The Lord of Love has said, “They who follow after the Unknowable and Indefinable, follow after Me and I accept them.” He has justified by His word the Illusionist and the Agnostic. Why then, O devotee, dost thou rail at him whom thy Master has accepted?

To the Divine Vision, all sincere human aspirations are acceptable, whatever diversity or even apparent contradiction there may be in their forms.

And all of them together are not enough to express the Divine Reality.

13 April 1970

474 – Calvin, who justified eternal Hell, knew not God but made one terrible mask of Him His eternal reality. If there were an unending Hell, it could only be a seat of unending rapture; for God is Ananda and than the eternity of His bliss there is no other eternity.

475 – Dante, when he said that God’s perfect love created eternal Hell, wrote perhaps wiselier than he knew; for from stray glimpses I have sometimes thought there is a Hell where our souls suffer aeons of intolerable ecstasy and wallow as if for ever in the utter embrace of Rudra, the sweet and terrible.

On Thoughts and Aphorisms

The divine splendours are too marvellous for human littleness, which finds it hard to bear them, and an eternity of delight may well be intolerable for a human being.

14 April 1970

476 – Discipleship to God the Teacher, sonship to God the Father, tenderness of God the Mother, clasp of the hand of the divine Friend, laughter and sport with our Comrade and boy Playfellow, blissful servitude to God the Master, rapturous love of our divine Paramour, these are the seven beatitudes of life in the human body. Canst thou unite all these in a single supreme and rainbow-hued relation? Then hast thou no need of any heaven and thou exceedest the emancipation of the Adwaitin.

There is nothing to add. It is a perfect programme.

It only remains for us to realise it.

15 April 1970

477 – When will the world change into the model of heaven? When all mankind becomes boys and girls together with God revealed as Krishna and Kali, the happiest boy and strongest girl of the crowd, playing together in the gardens of Paradise. The Semitic Eden was well enough, but Adam and Eve were too grown up and its God Himself too old and stern and solemn for the offer of the Serpent to be resisted.

478 – The Semites have afflicted mankind with the conception of a God who is a stern and dignified king and solemn judge and knows not mirth. But we who have seen Krishna, know Him for a boy fond of play and a child full of mischief and happy laughter.

479 – A God who cannot smile could not have created this humorous universe.

Ridicule is the strongest weapon against the powers of falsehood. With a single sentence, Sri Aurobindo annihilates the power of one of these man-made gods.

17 April 1970

480 – God took a child to fondle him in His bosom of delight; but the mother wept and would not be consoled because her child no longer existed.

481 – When I suffer from pain or grief or mischance, I say, “So, my old Playfellow, thou hast taken again to bullying me,” and I sit down to possess the pleasure of the pain, the joy of the grief, the good fortune of the mischance; then He sees He is found out and takes His ghosts and bugbears away from me.

With sparkling humour Sri Aurobindo endeavours to make us understand the falsehood of the ordinary human consciousness and the luminous and all-powerful joy of the Divine Consciousness we must acquire.

18 April 1970

482 – The seeker after divine knowledge finds in the description of Krishna stealing the robes of the Gopis one of the deepest parables of God’s ways with the soul, the devotee a perfect rendering in divine act of his heart’s mystic experiences, the prurient and the Puritan (two faces of one temperament) only a lustful story. Men bring what they have in themselves and see it reflected in the Scripture.

On Thoughts and Aphorisms

483 – My lover took away my robe of sin and I let it fall, rejoicing; then he plucked at my robe of virtue, but I was ashamed and alarmed and prevented him. It was not till he wrested it from me by force that I saw how my soul had been hidden from me.

Let us drop our robe of virtue so that we may be ready for the Truth.⁵

22 April 1970

484 – Sin is a trick and a disguise of Krishna to conceal Himself from the gaze of the virtuous. Behold, O Pharisee, God in the sinner, sin in thyself purifying thy heart; clasp thy brother.

As always, in his striking and humorous way, Sri Aurobindo tells us that the Divine truth is above both virtue and sin.

19 April 1970

485 – Love of God, charity towards men is the first step towards perfect wisdom.

486 – He who condemns failure and imperfection, is condemning God; he limits his own soul and cheats his own vision. Condemn not, but observe Nature, help and heal thy brothers and strengthen by sympathy their capacities and their courage.

487 – Love of man, love of woman, love of things, love of thy neighbour, love of thy country, love of animals, love of humanity are all the love of God reflected in these living

⁵ Oral reply.

images. So love and grow mighty to enjoy all, to help all and to love for ever.

488 – If there are things that absolutely refuse to be transformed or remedied into God's more perfect image, they may be destroyed with tenderness in the heart, but ruthlessness in the smiting. But make sure first that God has given thee thy sword and thy mission.

489 – I should love my neighbour not because he is neighbourhood, — for what is there in neighbourhood and distance? nor because the religions tell me he is my brother, — for where is the root of that brotherhood? but because he is myself. Neighbourhood and distance affect the body, the heart goes beyond them. Brotherhood is of blood or country or religion or humanity, but when self-interest clamours what becomes of this brotherhood? It is only by living in God and turning mind and heart and body into the image of his universal unity that that deep, disinterested and unassailable love becomes possible.

All the human reasons that are given for solidarity and mutual love are of little value and also of little effect. Only by becoming conscious of the Divine and uniting with Him can one attain and realise true Unity.

20 April 1970

490 – When I live in Krishna, then ego and self-interest vanish and only God himself can qualify my love bottomless and illimitable.

491 – Living in Krishna, even enmity becomes a play of love and the wrestling of brothers.

On Thoughts and Aphorisms

492 – To the soul that has hold of the highest beatitude, life cannot be an evil or a sorrowful illusion; rather all life becomes the rippling love and laughter of a divine Lover and Playfellow.

To know how to keep the Divine contact in all circumstances is the secret of beatitude.

21 April 1970

493 – Canst thou see God as the bodiless Infinite and yet love Him as a man loves his mistress? Then has the highest truth of the Infinite been revealed to thee. Canst thou also clothe the Infinite in one secret embraceable body and see Him seated in each and all of these bodies that are visible and sensible? Then has its widest and profoundest truth come also into thy possession.

494 – Divine Love has simultaneously a double play, an universal movement, deep, calm and bottomless like the nether Ocean, which broods upon the whole world and each thing that is in it as upon a level bed with an equal pressure, and a personal movement, forceful, intense and ecstatic like the dancing surface of the same Ocean, which varies the height and force of its billows and chooses the objects it shall fall upon with the kiss of its foam and spray and the clasp of its engulfing waters.

To make himself understood, Sri Aurobindo uses images that are accessible to everyone; but the marvels of Union infinitely exceed these human images.

22 April 1970

495 – I used to hate and avoid pain and resent its infliction; but now I find that had I not so suffered, I would not now possess, trained and perfected, this infinitely and multitudinously sensible capacity of delight in my mind, heart and body. God justifies Himself in the end even when He has masked Himself as a bully and a tyrant.

496 – I swore that I would not suffer from the world's grief and the world's stupidity and cruelty and injustice and I made my heart as hard in endurance as the nether millstone and my mind as a polished surface of steel. I no longer suffered, but enjoyment had passed away from me. Then God broke my heart and ploughed up my mind. I rose through cruel and incessant anguish to a blissful painlessness and through sorrow and indignation and revolt to an infinite knowledge and a settled peace.

It is the same lesson that the Supreme Lord wants to teach the body which He is transforming.

23 April 1970

497 – When I found that pain was the reverse side and the training of delight, I sought to heap blows on myself and multiply suffering in all my members; for even God's tortures seemed to me slow and slight and inefficient. Then my Lover had to stay my hand and cry, "Cease; for my stripes are enough for thee."

498 – The self-torture of the old monks and penitents was perverse and stupid; yet was there a secret soul of knowledge behind their perversities.

On Thoughts and Aphorisms

499 – God is our wise and perfect Friend; because He knows when to smite as well as when to fondle, when to slay us no less than when to save and to succour.

There is only one true wisdom, the wisdom of the Supreme Lord. Thus, to surrender all personal will and to want only what the Divine wants, is the only way to be truly wise.

24 April 1970

500 – The divine Friend of all creatures conceals His friendliness in the mask of an enemy till He has made us ready for the highest heavens; then, as in Kurukshetra, the terrible form of the Master of strife, suffering and destruction is withdrawn and the sweet face, the tenderness, the oft-clasped body of Krishna shine out on the shaken soul and purified eyes of his eternal comrade and playmate.

501 – Suffering makes us capable of the full force of the Master of Delight; it makes us capable also to bear the other play of the Master of Power. Pain is the key that opens the gates of strength; it is the high-road that leads to the city of beatitude.

502 – Yet, O soul of man, seek not after pain, for that is not His will, seek after His joy only; as for suffering, it will come to thee surely in His providence as often and as much as is needed for thee. Then bear it that thou mayst find out at last its heart of rapture.

503 – Neither do thou inflict pain, O man, on thy fellow; God alone has the right to inflict pain; or those have it whom He has commissioned. But deem not fanatically, as did Torquemada, that thou art one of these.

Never forget that so long as you are capable of preference in your relations with life and men, you cannot be a pure and perfect instrument of the Divine.

28 April 1970

504 – In former times there was a noble form of asseveration for souls compact merely of force and action, “As surely as God liveth.” But for our modern needs another asseveration would suit better, “As surely as God loveth.”

In our sorrowful age, almost withered by the excessive domination of the intellect, nothing can be at once more necessary and more precious than Divine Love.

29 April 1970

505 – Science is chiefly useful to the God-lover and the God-knower because it enables him to understand in detail and admire the curious wonders of His material workmanship. The one learns and cries, “Behold how the Spirit has manifested itself in matter”; the other, “Behold, the touch of my Lover and Master, the perfect Artist, the hand omnipotent.”

How can one be of service⁶ to the Divine since we exist by Him alone — all we can do is to clumsily return to Him a little of all that He has given us.

30 April 1970

506 – O Aristophanes of the universe, thou who watchest thy world and laughest sweetly to thyself, wilt thou not let

⁶ The translation used was based on a text which read “Service” instead of “Science”.

On Thoughts and Aphorisms

**me too see with divine eyes and share in thy worldwide
laughters?**

No doubt one must have a vision as total as the Divine Vision
to be able to laugh at this world as it is.

1 May 1970

**507 – Kalidasa says in a daring image that the snowrocks
of Kailasa are Shiva’s loud world-laughters piled up in
utter whiteness and pureness on the mountain-tops. It
is true; and when their image falls on the heart, then the
world’s cares melt away like the clouds below into their
real nothingness.**

Human science makes very exact observations; but the field is
open to imagine the true causes — why not occult causes?

2 May 1970

**508 – The strangest of the soul’s experiences is this, that it
finds, when it ceases to care for the image and threat of
troubles, then the troubles themselves are nowhere to
be found in one’s neighbourhood. It is then that we hear
from behind those unreal clouds God laughing at us.**

Lord, and when You want the image to change into your like-
ness, what do You do?

4 May 1970

I did not understand what You wrote yesterday.

What Sri Aurobindo calls “the image” is the physical body. So I
asked the Lord what He does when He wants to transform the
physical body, and last night He gave me two visions in answer.

One concerned the liberation of the body consciousness from all the conventions regarding death; and in the other He showed me what the supramental body will be. You see that I did well to ask Him!

9 May 1970

509 – Has thy effort succeeded, O thou Titan? Dost thou sit, like Ravana and Hiranyakashipou,⁷ served by the gods and the world's master? But that which thy soul was really hunting after, has escaped from thee.

510 – Ravana's mind thought it was hungering after universal sovereignty and victory over Rama; but the aim his soul kept its vision fixed upon all the time was to get back to its heaven as soon as possible and be again God's menial. Therefore, as the shortest way, it hurled itself against God in a furious clasp of enmity.

511 – The greatest of joys is to be, like Narada, the slave of God; the worst of Hells being abandoned of God, to be the world's master. That which seems nearest to the ignorant conception of God, is the farthest from him.

512 – God's servant is something; God's slave is greater.

Sri Aurobindo gives us the true way to understand the Scriptures, which thus become universal symbols.

12 May 1970

513 – To be master of the world would indeed be supreme felicity, if one were universally loved; but for that one

⁷ Two demon kings.

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would have to be at the same time the slave of all humanity.

514 – After all, when thou countest up thy long service to God, thou wilt find thy supreme work was the flawed and little good thou didst in love for humanity.

That is why, rather than to serve, it is better to belong totally, absolutely to the Divine.

13 May 1970

In order to belong absolutely and totally to the Divine, isn't it necessary to begin by serving the Divine?

Certainly, to place all one's work at the service of the Divine is a very good way of approach, but it doesn't go much further than what Sri Aurobindo describes, and for some it is not satisfying.

14 May 1970

515 – There are two works that are perfectly pleasing to God in his servant; to sweep in silent adoration His temple-floors and to fight in the world's battlefield for His divine consummation in humanity.

516 – He who has done even a little good to human beings, though he be the worst of sinners, is accepted by God in the ranks of His lovers and servants. He shall look upon the face of the Eternal.

Sri Aurobindo's effort was always directed towards liberating his disciples or even his readers from all preconceptions, all conventional morality.

15 May 1970

517 – O fool of thy weakness, cover not God’s face from thyself by a veil of awe, approach Him not with a suppliant weakness. Look! thou wilt see on His face not the solemnity of the King and Judge, but the smile of the Lover.

518 – Until thou canst learn to grapple with God as a wrestler with his comrade, thy soul’s strength shall always be hid from thee.

Wouldn’t it be good, once and for all, to get rid of all our limitations and weaknesses, if we truly want to draw close to the Divine?

16 May 1970

519 – Sumbha⁸ first loved Kali with his heart and body, then was furious with her and fought her, at last prevailed against her, seized her by the hair and whirled her thrice round him in the heavens; the next moment he was slain by her. These are the Titan’s four strides to immortality and of them all the last is the longest and mightiest.

I do not understand the meaning of “the Titan’s four strides to immortality”.

Whatever the nature of an individual may be, ultimately, in one way or another, whether he fights him or loves him, the End is always the Divine.

17 May 1970

⁸ A demon king.

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520 – Kali is Krishna revealed as dreadful Power and wrathful Love. She slays with her furious blows the self in body, life and mind in order to liberate it as spirit eternal.

Shall we complain when we see this helpless little “ego” disappearing and giving way to a luminous spark capable of understanding the universe?

21 May 1970

521 – Our parents fell, in the deep Semitic apologue, because they tasted the fruit of the tree of good and evil. Had they taken at once of the tree of eternal life, they would have escaped the immediate consequence; but God’s purpose in humanity would have been defeated. His wrath is our eternal advantage.

Sri Aurobindo is trying to make us understand how the limitations of our vision prevent us from perceiving the Divine Wisdom.

22 May 1970

522 – If Hell were possible, it would be the shortest cut to the highest heaven. For verily God loveth.

523 – God drives us out every Eden that we may be forced to travel through the desert to a diviner Paradise. If thou wonder why should that parched and fierce transit be necessary, then art thou befooled by thy mind and hast not studied thy soul behind and its dim desires and secret raptures.

When we no longer have any affinity with suffering and are

cured of all perverse attachment to it, the Divine will help us to discover that it conceals the supreme bliss.

23 May 1970

524 – A healthy mind hates pain; for the desire of pain that men sometimes develop in their minds is morbid and contrary to Nature. But the soul cares not for the mind and its sufferings any more than the iron-master for the pain of the ore in the furnace; it follows its own necessities and its own hunger.

The Supreme Lord alone should be the Master and it is He, as a rule, whom the psychic being obeys.

24 May 1970

525 – Indiscriminate compassion is the noblest gift of temperament, not to do even the least hurt to one living thing is the highest of all human virtues; but God practises neither. Is man therefore nobler and better than the All-loving?

526 – To find that saving a man's body or mind from suffering is not always for the good of either soul, mind or body, is one of the bitterest of experiences for the humanly compassionate.

To be conscious of the Divine Consciousness is the supreme fulfilment offered to human realisation; all the rest are only inessentials.

25 May 1970

On Thoughts and Aphorisms

527 – Human pity is born of ignorance and weakness; it is the slave of emotional impressions. Divine compassion understands, discerns and saves.

528 – Pity is sometimes a good substitute for love; but it is always no more than a substitute.

To understand the divine intention and to work for its fulfilment — isn't this the surest way to help humanity?

28 May 1970

529 – Self-pity is always born of self-love; but pity for others is not always born of love for its object. It is sometimes a self-regarding shrinking from the sight of pain; sometimes the rich man's contemptuous dole to the pauper. Develop rather God's divine compassion than human pity.

530 – Not pity that bites the heart and weakens the inner members, but a divine masterful and untroubled compassion and helpfulness is the virtue that we should encourage.

Can there be any greater misfortune than to live without knowing the Supreme Lord? And yet this almost universal ill rarely excites any pity. Because one who knows that he is suffering from it also knows that the cure depends on him alone — for the Lord's compassion is infinite.

1 June 1970

531 – Love and serve men, but beware lest thou desire their approbation. Obey rather God within thee.

532 – Not to have heard the voice of God and His angels is the world's idea of sanity.

533 – See God everywhere and be not frightened by masks. Believe that all falsehood is truth in the making or truth in the breaking, all failure an effectuality concealed, all weakness strength hiding itself from its own vision, all pain a secret and violent ecstasy. If thou believest firmly and unweariedly, in the end thou wilt see and experience the All-true, Almighty and All-blissful.

By tireless constancy in effort and faith, we can unite with the Divine Consciousness which is constant and perfect beatitude.

2 June 1970

534 – Human love fails by its own ecstasy, human strength is exhausted by its own effort, human knowledge throws a shadow that conceals half the globe of truth from its own sunlight; but divine knowledge embraces opposite truths and reconciles them, divine strength grows by the prodigality of its self-expenditure, divine love can squander itself utterly, yet never waste or diminish.

Can human love change into divine love, human strength into divine strength and human knowledge into divine knowledge?

There is only one love.

Human love is nothing but divine love perverted and distorted by the instrument through which it is expressed. The same holds true for strength and knowledge. In their essence they are eternal and unlimited. It is the limitations and deficiencies

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of human nature which distort them and alter them beyond recognition.

3 June 1970

535 – The rejection of falsehood by the mind seeking after truth is one of the chief causes why mind cannot attain to the settled, rounded and perfect truth; not to escape falsehood is the effort of divine mind, but to seize the truth which lies masked behind even the most grotesque or far-wandering error.

What is the “divine mind”?

What Sri Aurobindo calls the divine mind is the prototype of the mental function which is totally and perfectly surrendered to the Divine and works only under divine inspiration.

When a human being exists only by and for the Divine, his mind necessarily becomes a divine mind.

4 June 1970

536 – The whole truth about any object is a rounded and all-embracing globe which for ever circles around but never touches the one and only subject and object of knowledge, God.

537 – There are many profound truths which are like weapons dangerous to the unpractised wielder. Rightly handled, they are the most precious and potent in God’s armoury.

One drop of true knowledge can create a revolution if it falls into a world of ignorance.

5 June 1970

538 – The obstinate pertinacity with which we cling to our meagre, fragmentary, night-besieged and grief-besieged individual existence even while the unbroken bliss of our universal life calls to us, is one of the most amazing of God’s mysteries. It is only equalled by the infinite blindness with which we cast a shadow of our ego over the whole world and call that the universal being. These two darknesses are the very essence and potency of Maya.

Until, tired of the ignorance and stupidity of the ego, we lay ourselves at the feet of the Lord and ask Him to become the sole master.

6 June 1970

539 – Atheism is the shadow or dark side of the highest perception of God. Every formula we frame about God, though always true as a symbol, becomes false when we accept it as a sufficient formula. The Atheist and Agnostic come to remind us of our error.

540 – God’s negations are as useful to us as His affirmations. It is He who as the Atheist denies His own existence for the better perfecting of human knowledge. It is not enough to see God in Christ and Ramakrishna and hear His words, we must see Him and hear Him also in Huxley and Haeckel.

All mental ways of knowing the Divine are incomplete and insufficient, even if we accept them all. Only a knowledge that is lived can give us a glimpse of the truth.

7 June 1970

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541 – Canst thou see God in thy torturer and slayer even in thy moment of death or thy hours of torture? Canst thou see Him in that which thou art slaying, see and love even while thou slayest? Thou hast thy hand on the supreme knowledge. How shall he attain to Krishna who has never worshipped Kali?

All is the Divine and the Divine alone exists.

8 June 1970