

Series Six

Letters to a Young Sadhak

*To a young sadhak who later became a teacher in the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education.*¹

I

I hope and believe Your work does not depend upon human beings.

No, it does not depend at all upon human beings. What has to be done will be done despite all possible resistances.

*

Is there no means of uniting my will with Yours? Perhaps You have no special will, for You want nothing.

I know perfectly well what I want or rather what the divine Will is, and it is that which will triumph in time.

*

What we want to bring to the earth can hardly be called a *revolution*, although it will be the most marvellous change ever seen; in any case this cannot be compared at all with the bloody revolutions which quite uselessly tear up countries without bringing any great change after them, because they leave men as false, as ignorant, as egoistic as before.

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¹ This Series is organised broadly by subject into thirteen parts—the form in which it was originally published; in this it differs from the other Series, which are arranged chronologically. The replies here were written between 1933 and 1949—most of them between 1933 and 1935.

Some Answers from the Mother

I believe a day will come when the Divine will be seen quite naturally as one sees earthly things and then there will be no need to exclaim: "The Divine is everywhere" — for this will be a normal experience.

If the realisation were to be limited to this, it would hardly be worth much. It is an integral transformation of terrestrial life which is anticipated.

*

Beloved Mother, every moment I feel a great transformation taking place in me. Isn't this true?

It is quite true. But it seems to me that even the outer forms, the appearances are changing more than you say. Only, this is not very easily seen because it happens normally, in accordance with the law of the truth of things, and not arbitrarily through a mental decision.

*

Certainly the Divine Grace is always at work, it is the material world and the men living there that do not want it!

*

What does the Divine want of me?

He wants that you first find yourself; that with your true being, your psychic being, you master and govern the lower being, and then you will quite naturally take your proper place in the great Divine Work.

*

Where is my true being?

Farther within or higher above, on the other side of the emotions, beyond the mind.

*

I feel indignant, Mother, for I cannot find my “self”, as soon as I try to do so, I find nothing but this body, which is like a lair of banal thoughts and lawless desires.

One must persist without getting discouraged, and first of all refuse to recognise the body as one’s “self”. Indeed, what would it be without the feelings and thoughts which animate it? An inert, lifeless mass.

*

Mother, what is it that will help me always remember that I am living a spiritual life?

The awareness of the Divine Presence in all things and always.

*

You have said in your Conversations that to prepare oneself for the Yoga one must first of all be conscious. To be conscious of the Divine Presence in us is our goal; I don’t see how I can be conscious from the beginning.

I have not said “conscious of the Divine Presence”, I have said “conscious”; that means one does not live in total ignorance of what happens within oneself.

*

I cannot accept all that happens with a calm heart.

This is, however, indispensable for yoga; and he who has so great an aim as to be united with the Divine and to manifest Him, how can he be affected by all the futilities and foolishnesses of life?

*

Some Answers from the Mother

There are people who say one must unite closely with the outer nature to be able to taste the joy which the manifested world so effectively conceals.

I don't think this is true; union with the outer nature brings more certainly sorrow than joy!

*

If you were a man of the world as you say, you would not be here; you would be in the world. These are certain elements in the being which remain attached to their old activities and refuse to change. They will have to yield and be transformed one day or another.

*

I ask You once again, Mother, what is it that divides my being?

The conflict is between that which aspires towards consciousness, the "sattwic" part of the being, and that which lets itself be invaded and governed by the inconscience, the "tamasic" part of the being, between that which pushes upwards and that which pulls downwards and therefore is subject to all outer influences.

*

Mother, Your world may hurt me, but it cannot give me any enjoyment; I myself too do not want any.

It is good to be above all enjoyments the world can give, but why accept to be hurt by it?

*

I don't like this life without any attachments.

If truly you are no longer attached to anything, it is a great yogic realisation and it would be wrong of you to complain about it.

*

The whole world is against me and I am in despair.

Why do you want to think the whole world is against you? This is childish.

*

My physical mind is not yet convinced that human life is capable of overcoming all suffering and even death.

It may be that human life is indeed incapable of it; but for the divine life nothing is impossible.

*

Is it strange that one should become disgusted with this world? The repetition of the same round — that is death itself.

This is one way of seeing things; but there is another in which one finds that no two things, no two moments are exactly alike in the world and that everything is in perpetual change.

*

I do not understand a phrase in Your Prayers: “and that all are equal — infinitesimal grains of dust or identical stars — before Eternity”.

All the stars (spiritually speaking) are the same. I mean that one may call human beings grains of dust if one likes, or compare them to the stars; in either case they are all alike in size and worth before Eternity.

Some Answers from the Mother

II

Beloved Mother, guide my steps, illumine my mind, and do not leave, I pray, any distance between You and me.

I too do not want any distance between us. But the relation must be a true one, that is, based on union in the divine consciousness.

*

Open your heart yet wider, yet better, and the distance will disappear.

*

This prison that separates me from You and from the Divine must be broken. O Mother, I don't know what I ought to do.

It is in a calm and persevering will that this can be accomplished.

*

May my whole being be only that love which wants to give itself, and which leads me to You.

Keep this aspiration and you are sure of victory; you will love me one day with a love which fills you with strength and with joy.

*

My Mother, with all my will and all my effort I want to realise that love which You have foreseen in your divine vision.

I shall always be with you in your endeavour.

*

My dear Mother, I do not say that I love You and belong to You, I must prove it in my actions; without that these would be worthless words behind which a man seeks shelter and protection. But even so, I am always Your child.

That's good. You are indeed always my child and I expect you to become even more a good child who will be able to tell me in all sincerity and truth: "I love You and I am Yours for all eternity."

*

O Mother, take me with You; I shall seat You for ever in my heart; I could not bear to lose You.

There is no question of losing me. We carry in ourselves an eternal consciousness and it is of this that one must become aware.

*

Whatever the reason may be, as soon as my consciousness loses You I become joyless and without energy.

At no moment do I forget you. Don't you rather allow too many other influences to come between you and me?

*

Mother, why is it so difficult to feel Your Presence constantly near me? In the depths of my heart I know well that without You there is no meaning in life for me; yet my mind flits hither and thither as soon as it finds the slightest occasion.

It is precisely because of this that you lose the feeling of the Presence.

*

Some Answers from the Mother

I am always with you, and to become conscious of the inner Presence is one of the most important points of the sadhana. Ask X, he will tell you that the Presence is not a matter of faith or of mental imagination, it is a fact, absolutely concrete and as real and tangible to the consciousness as the most material phenomenon.

*

My beloved Mother, if only I could convince my ignorant being that it is possible to find You in the centre of my heart.

It is not a question of *convincing* your heart, you must get the *experience* of this presence and then you will become aware that in its depths your heart has always been conscious of this presence.

*

Remove from me all obscurity which blinds me, and be always with me.

I am in every thought, every aspiration which you turn towards me; for if you were not always present in my consciousness you would not be able to think of me. So you may be sure of my presence. I add my blessings.

*

Beloved Mother, how shall I find the source of that Love which will make me feel that the divine Presence is always and everywhere?

You must find the Divine first, whether in yourself by interiorisation and concentration, or in Sri Aurobindo and me through love and self-giving. Once you have found the Divine you will naturally see Him in all things and everywhere.

*

There are two ways of uniting with the Divine. One is to concentrate in the heart and go deep enough to find there His Presence; the other is to fling oneself in His arms, to nestle there as a child nestles in its mother's arms, with a *complete surrender*; and of the two the latter seems to me the easier.

*

My darling Mother, if the Divine shows Himself to me in exchange for my love for Him and the giving of my soul, then it is a very easy thing for me.

Not only of the soul, but of the whole being, without reserve.

*

Who is there to hold me back far from You?

You yourself.

It is quite incorrect that I wish to remain far from you; but to be near me you must climb up close beside me, and not expect me to come down so far.

*

My beloved Mother, one day You wrote to me that I must climb to the plane where You are, to be able to have You intimately, and that I must not expect You to come down here. But Mother, You are so great and remain so high up that it seems to me almost impossible to climb up there. There is a world of difference between our two planes. I dare not dream of the moment I shall be at your side; You will always be higher, and I shall aspire to You; I shall follow You from plane to plane, but You will be always far from me. This picture does not appear bad to me, because I know there is a great

Some Answers from the Mother

joy in seeking; but it is true that my heart will always be thirsty.

From a certain point of view what you say is true; but there is also a sort of reversal of consciousness in which it comes out of its state of blind and falsifying ignorance and enters into a state of truth, and when that reversal, that conversion takes place, you will feel yourself always close to me.

*

My beloved Mother, is it not possible to meet You on some other plane than the physical? I don't mean by leaving the body; even when in the body, is it not possible to meet on some other higher plane?

Certainly, this is quite possible. But one must awaken to the consciousness of these planes.

*

Mother, I want simply to leave the body; it is the body which separates me from You.

To say that it is your body which separates you from me is sheer stupidity. It seems to me that actually it is just the opposite, for without the possibility of seeing me daily, what contact will you have with me in the present state of your consciousness? Are you capable of feeling me, experiencing concretely my presence, even when your physical eyes do not see me? I don't think so, for if it were so, you would not complain of separation, you would know, on the contrary, that there is no separation and that in the reality of your being we are always united.

To think that if you leave your body you will come closer to me is a big mistake; for the vital being remains what it is, whether the body be alive or dead, and if the vital being is, during one's life, incapable of feeling the nearness, the deep intimacy, how

can one reasonably hope it will suddenly be able to do so just because it has left the body? It is ignorant childishness.

And that other idea that if the body is changed the next one will necessarily be better, is also a mistake. It is only when one has profited fully and *to the utmost* by the opportunity for progress which life in a physical body represents, that one may hope to be reborn in a higher organism. All defection, on the contrary, naturally brings in a diminution of being.

Only the resolution to face courageously, in the present existence, all the difficulties, and to overcome them, is the sure means of attaining the union you desire.

*

My one hope is to progress as much as I can, so that my next birth may not be useless like this one.

This is all nonsense; we have not to busy ourselves with the next life, but with this one which offers us, *till our very last breath*, all its possibilities. To put off for the next birth what one can do in this life is like putting off for tomorrow what one can do this very day; it is laziness. It is only with death that the possibility of integral realisation ceases; so long as one is alive, nothing is impossible.

*

What cannot be acquired or conquered during life can certainly not be done after death. It is the physical life which is the true field for progress and realisation.

*

Beloved Mother, I must either be transformed or cease to be.

It is impossible *to cease to be*; nothing that belongs to the manifested universe can go out of it except through the door of spiritual liberation, that is, *transformation*.

Some Answers from the Mother

III

I often ask myself if there is a truth behind this desire to come close to You.

Yes, there is the Truth of perfect union with the Divine in an identity of consciousness and will.

*

My sweet Mother, do You say that I ought to overcome this desire to come to You physically?

I have never said anything of the kind. But you must prepare yourself, purify yourself within, so that this approach may be useful and profitable.

*

If you say I am there for you *alone*, obviously it is egoistic and false; but if you think I am there for all my children, that I carry them in my heart, that I want to lead them to the Divine and that I am grieved when they move away from Him, — then this is quite true.

*

I have not the least intention of keeping you away from me; I wanted only to remind you that you are not alone in the Ashram and that I have to divide my time among all those who have need of me.

*

If you are physically far from me and think of me all the time, you will surely be nearer to me than if you were seated near me but thinking about other things.

*

Mother, how can I feel You concretely near me, even when my body is far from You?

By concentrating your thought.

*

Beloved Mother, there are twenty-four hours in a day, but I can't remain at Your feet for more than a few seconds; how can I live?

Go within into yourself, find your psychic being and you will find me at the same time, living in you, life of your life, ever present and ever near, quite concretely and tangibly.

*

Remain very quiet, open your mind and your heart to Sri Aurobindo's influence and mine, withdraw deep into an inner silence (which may be had in all circumstances), call me from the depths of this silence and you will see me standing there in the centre of your being.

*

Because I stopped the pranam for two days, you should not think that I was not with you. Wherever you work, physically near or far, *I am always with you in your work and in your consciousness.* You ought to know that.

*

Life will no longer have any attraction for me if I do not feel that You are with me.

But I am always with you.

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Do not leave my heart empty, Mother.

I am always in your heart.

*

The psychic being is constantly and invariably in contact with the Divine and never loses this contact.

*

The Divine is constantly present in the psychic being and the latter is quite conscious of this.

*

The psychic being is asleep in me.

The psychic being is not asleep. It is the connection with it which is not well established because the mind makes too much noise and the vital is too restless.

*

Mother, if the psychic always feels the Divine Presence, why does the human being cry and lament the lack of this Presence?

I have already told you that it is because the contact between the outer consciousness and the psychic consciousness is not well established. He in whom this contact is well established is always happy.

*

The suffering we experience proves that the psychic being is far away from the Divine.

It is not the psychic being which suffers, it is the mind, the vital and the ordinary consciousness of ignorant man.

*

Series Six – To a Young Sadhak

About ten or eleven years ago I had an experience in Your presence and through You. I was in a great difficulty and was feeling quite lost. Suddenly I felt something that rose from the depths of my being, through a crowd of obstacles, and when this thing had come out above, all was changed in me; then I was in joy and peace and all difficulties suddenly disappeared. Since that day I have not had any difficulty which could bar my way.

What was this thing, Mother?

Certainly it was the psychic being, but it became active only through my intervention.

*

Now, if you don't like me to show you your faults, I can very well stop doing it. But then you should no longer ask me to help you to progress, for you cannot on the one hand ask me to intervene and on the other refuse my intervention.

*

If you are vexed by what I tell you, it proves that you do not wish to progress, and consequently that it is not necessary for me to make you aware of what is to be changed in you.

*

I feel, Mother, that I am a very frivolous fellow; won't You change me?

I would be very happy to change you, but are you quite sure that what is frivolous in you wants to change?

*

How do you expect me to help you if you have no trust in me!

*

Some Answers from the Mother

I shall never be able to realise fully this relationship which exists eternally, if You don't help me to do it.

My help is there completely; you have only to open yourself to it with confidence and you will receive it.

*

Yes, my help is with you to master all the movements which are opposed to the Divine.

*

I have not the least intention in the world to push you into a corner, and if I had not the full assurance that you can overcome all these difficulties, I would not even have mentioned them. It is no good telling someone, "You have such and such a fault", if it does not help him to correct it.

*

This morning I was thinking I would get another blow from You.

I don't see why I should give you blows — I don't give them for the pleasure of giving them, but only when they are altogether indispensable.

*

After all, my whole life is consecrated to You; I shall remain very calm without bothering about what happens to me.

That's very good, but if you were to add to this the idea that I know you and love you better than you yourself do and that I know better than you what is good for you — then that would be perfect.

*

Mother of joy, I am surprised to find that there are people who think that You call only those sadhaks who cannot receive Your Grace from afar; and that it is a sign of weakness on the part of those who see You from time to time.

Don't bother about what people believe or say; it is almost always ignorant stupidities.

I always wonder that people imagine they can know the reasons for my actions! I act differently for each one, according to the needs of his particular case.

*

I don't think it would be bad to let You know about a thought, an idea which goes on in me, even if this idea, this thought is bad.

On the contrary, it is good to let me know immediately.

*

Nothing is better than a confession for opening the closed doors. *Tell me what you fear most to tell me*, and immediately you will feel yourself closer to me.

IV

The Divine is infinite and innumerable, and consequently the ways of approaching Him are also infinite and innumerable, and on the manner of one's approach to the Divine depends what he receives and knows of the Divine. The bhakta meets a Divine full of affection and sweetness, the wise man will find a Divine full of wisdom and knowledge. He who fears meets a severe Divine, and he who is trusting finds the Divine a friend and protector... and so on in the infinite variety of possibilities.

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Fear nothing: the Divine always answers every sincere aspiration and never refuses what is offered to Him whole-heartedly; thus you may live in the peace of the certitude that you are accepted by the Divine.

*

Beloved Mother, how to master this lethargy that overcomes me? I do not live, Mother, I just exist in some way. Mother, I must find something which can divert me.

It is certainly not with such a state of mind that you can hope to find the Divine Presence. Far from seeking to fill your heart with frivolities in order to “divert” it, you must with a great obstinacy empty it of everything, absolutely everything, both great and small, so that the power of that great emptiness may attract the Marvellous Presence. One must know how to pay this supreme Grace the price it deserves.

*

Of each one is asked only what he has, what he is, nothing more, but also nothing less.

*

You are right to want to create the emptiness in you; for you will soon discover that in the depths of this emptiness is the Divine.

*

If I find some solace in books, how can I say that nothing sustains me and that I am plunged in the divine life through an absolute emptiness?

“The absolute emptiness” is more of an image than a reality. It is better to keep in one’s heart a high aspiration rather than an obscure somnolence.

*

When I try to look within myself, I find there a being that is detached from everything, a great indifference reigns there.

Indifference is a stage of development which must lead to a perfect equality of soul.

*

Mother, my life is dry, it was always so; the dryness of my life constantly increases.

This does not depend upon any outer circumstance but on your inner state. It happens because you live in a very superficial region of your mind. You must try to find some depth in your consciousness and dwell there.

*

It is certainly not by becoming morose and melancholy that one draws near the Divine. One must always keep in one's heart an unshakable faith and confidence and in one's head the certitude of victory. Drive away these shadows which come between you and me and hide me from your sight. It is in the pure light of certitude that you can become conscious of my presence.

*

The sadder you are and the more you lament, the farther you move away from me. The Divine is *not sad* and to realise the Divine you must reject far from yourself all sadness and all sentimental weakness.

*

Sweet Mother, I am happy because I love You and because I suffer a little in loving You.

I don't see the need of your suffering. Psychic love is always peaceful and joyous; it is the vital which dramatises and makes

Some Answers from the Mother

itself unhappy without any reason. I hope, indeed, that you will soon become conscious of my presence always near you, and that it will give you peace and joy.

*

My most beloved Mother, the idea of separation opens between You and me like a frightening abyss. I am not satisfied; from where does this dissatisfaction come?

It is always the vital being which protests and complains. The psychic being works with perseverance and ardour to make the union an accomplished fact, but it never complains, and knows how to wait for the hour of realisations to come.

*

It is the vital which asks and asks and is never satisfied... The psychic, the true deep feelings are always satisfied and never ask for anything. The psychic feels my constant presence, is aware of my love and solicitude, and is always peaceful, happy and satisfied.

*

There is a joy in seeking, a joy in waiting, a joy in aspiring, at least as great as in possessing.

*

Indeed, nothing brings more happiness than a pure and disinterested love.

*

The true divine love is above all quarrels. It is the experience of perfect union in an invariable joy and peace.

*

Radha is the symbol of loving consecration to the Divine.

*

Keep always your balance and a calm serenity; it is only thus that one can attain the true Union.

*

It is in your soul that the calmness can be found and it is by contagion that it spreads through your being. It is not steady because the sovereignty of your soul is not yet definitively established over all the being.

*

I don't see anything wrong in not being sentimental; nothing is further from true love, the divine love, than sentimentality.

*

All will be done, Mother, but why is my heart becoming more and more dry and hard?

Are you quite sure it is so dry and hard? Don't you call "dry and hard" an absence of *sentimentality*, that is, of a weak and superficial emotionalism?

True love is something *very deep* and *very calm* in its intensity; it may very well not manifest itself through outer effusiveness.

*

To love is not to possess, but to give oneself.

*

Some Answers from the Mother

I don't experience a violent and uncontrollable love for anyone; nobody attracts me. And it is because of this that I told You I was losing all human feelings.

This can hardly be called a loss; I consider it an inestimable gain.

*

A love which is sufficiently strong can make a person the slave of the beloved.

You speak here of vital love, but certainly not of psychic love and still less of the Divine Love.

*

The person I love belongs to me.

This is a very ugly love, quite egoistic.

*

The Ashram is not a place for being in love with anyone. If you want to lapse into such a stupidity, you may do so elsewhere, not here.

*

It is not this person or that who attracts you... it is the eternal feminine in the lower nature which attracts the eternal masculine in the lower nature and creates an illusion in the mind; it is the great play, obscure and semi-conscious, of the forces of unillumined nature; and as soon as one succeeds in escaping from its blind and violent whirlwind, one finds very quickly that all desires and all attractions vanish; only the ardent aspiration for the Divine remains.

*

My beloved Mother, the whole day I thought of nothing else except that red rose which signifies “Human passions changed into love for the Divine”. I want to know precisely what the human passions are.

By “passion” we mean all the violent desires which take possession of a man and finally govern his life — the drunkard has the passion for drink, the debauchee the passion for women, the gambler the passion for dice, etc. If one human being feels a violent and uncontrollable love for another, this is called a *passion*, and it is of this we are speaking; it is this impassioned love which human beings feel for one another that must be changed into love for the Divine.

*

Sensations belong to the vital domain and to that part of it which is expressed through the nerves of the body. It is sentiments and emotions which are characteristic of the heart. It is always preferable not to live in the sensations but to consider them as something outside ourselves, like the clothes we wear.

V

Be courageous and do not think of yourself so much. It is because you make your little ego the centre of your preoccupation that you are sad and unsatisfied. To forget oneself is the great remedy for all ills.

*

Certainly it is always better not to be too busy with oneself.

*

Some Answers from the Mother

An excessive depreciation is no better than an excessive praise. True humility lies in not judging oneself and in letting the Divine determine our real worth.

*

Perhaps my vanity was better than this humility which so casts me down.

You must avoid the one as carefully as the other.

*

My most beloved Mother, an introspection has revealed to me many things. There is a jealousy in me which blinds me; another part in me is very vain, it gives me the idea that I have already reached my goal.

You have just given a very correct description, but it becomes useful only from the moment you resolve that it is no longer going to be like this, and that you will strive to conquer your two great enemies: jealousy and vanity. The more we advance on the road, the more modest we become, and the more we find that we have done nothing in comparison with what remains to be done.

*

It is when one feels like a blind man that one begins to be ready for the illumination.

*

Formerly I used to repeat to myself: "I am one of the greatest sadhaks." Now I tell myself: "I am nobody."

The best thing is not to think oneself either great or small, very important or very insignificant; for we are nothing in ourselves. We must want to be only what the divine Will wants of us.

*

All my good intentions, since my childhood, have been of no worth. My nature is just what it was when I was a child. I can scarcely hope that it will be transformed; and after all, is it worth the trouble to try and transform it? It is better not to think of this personal nature as mine; not to identify myself with it is the best remedy I can find against the lower and inconscient nature.

Nothing of all this is the right attitude. So long as you oscillate between wanting to transform yourself and not wanting to transform yourself — making an effort to progress and becoming indifferent to all effort through fatigue — the true attitude will not be there. All your observations should lead you to one certainty, that by oneself one is nothing and can do nothing. Only the Divine is the life of our life, the consciousness of our consciousness, the Power and Capacity in us. It is to Him that we must entrust ourselves, give ourselves without reserve, and it is He who will make of us what He wants in His infinite wisdom.

VI

My sweet beloved Mother, I read in the Conversations: “Concentration alone will lead you to this goal.” Should one increase the time of meditation?

Concentration does not mean meditation; on the contrary, concentration is a state one must be in continuously, whatever the outer activity. By concentration I mean that all the energy, all the

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will, all the aspiration must be turned only towards the Divine and His integral realisation in our consciousness.

*

To keep constantly a concentrated and in-gathered attitude is more important than having fixed hours of meditation.

*

It would have been better to have sat in my chair and thought about the moonlight playing upon the water.

Or, better still, not to have thought at all but contemplated the Divine Grace.

*

If you do your work as an offering which you lay in all sincerity at the feet of the Divine, work will do you as much good as meditation.

*

Perhaps I am mistaken in believing that I shall find myself close to you more rapidly by dissolving my being than by mixing with many people and doing much work.

I have had the experience myself that one can be fully concentrated and be in union with the Divine even while working physically with one's hands; but naturally this asks for a little practice, and for this the most important thing to avoid is *useless talking*. It is not *work* but *useless talk* which takes us away from the Divine.

*

All depends not on what one does but on the attitude behind the action.

*

If in all sincerity one acts only to express the Divine Will, all actions without exception can become unselfish. But so long as one has not reached this state, there are actions which are more helpful for the contact with the Divine.

*

The yogic life does not depend on what one does but on how one does it; I mean it is not so much the action which counts as the attitude, the spirit in which one acts. To know how to give yourself entirely and without egoism while washing dishes or serving a meal brings you much nearer the Divine than doing what men call “great things” in a spirit of vanity and pride.

*

First of all I must know if this work can be a means of my coming a little closer to You.

It is not the work, any work, in itself which can bring you close to me. It is the spirit in which it is done that is important.

*

Mother, which is this being that receives happily any work from You? Which is this being that loves You?

It is that part of your being which is under the influence of the psychic and obeys the Divine impulsion.

*

Do I serve You as best I can?

You serve me as best you can, but your best of tomorrow must be better than your best of today.

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Without discipline it is impossible to realise anything on the physical plane. If your heart were not willing to submit to the strict discipline of beating regularly and constantly, you would not be able to live upon earth.

The great realisers have always been the great disciplined men.

*

It is not that there is a dearth of people without work in the Ashram; but those who are without work are certainly so because they do not like to work; and for that disease it is very difficult to find a remedy — it is called laziness...

*

The body is naturally phlegmatic. But in working for You it will cease being "tamasic".

Yes, this is just what will happen.

*

I try always to be more careful, but things get spoilt in my hands.

Yes, this happens often; but you must call in more and more peace and let it enter into the cells of the body; then the suggestion of awkwardness can no longer have any effect.

*

Mother, X has broken a porcelain bowl.

Yesterday you were surprised that she had never broken anything, — naturally today she has broken something; this is how mental formations work. That is why one must state only what one wishes to see realised.

*

You must abstain from thinking about a person when you cannot think anything good about him.

VII

I must find out how I can consecrate this being to You.

Keep always burning in you the fire of aspiration and purification which I have kindled there.

*

Without perseverance one never attains anything.

Because a thing is difficult it does not mean that one should give it up; on the contrary, the more difficult a thing is, the greater must be the will to carry it out successfully.

Of all things the most difficult is to bring the divine consciousness into the material world. Must the endeavour then be given up because of this?

*

Our way is *very long*, and it is indispensable to advance calmly without asking oneself at every step whether one is advancing.

*

If you persevere you are sure to succeed; as for my help you may rest assured it is always with you, and one never calls in vain.

*

If you resolve to do it, my force will be there to back up your effort.

*

Some Answers from the Mother

You would be wrong to get disturbed; nothing is done arbitrarily, and things get realised only when they are the expression of an inner truth.

*

Yes, your mind gets too excited about things. It makes formations (it thinks forcefully: this must be like that, that must be otherwise, etc.) and unknowingly it clings to its own formations in such a way that when they are contradicted it gets a shock and this gives it pain. It must become calm and develop the habit of remaining quiet.

*

Have faith in the Divine Grace and the hour of liberation will be hastened.

*

It is absolutely false that anything human can heal a human evil. *Only the Divine* can heal. It is in *Him alone* that one must seek help and support, it is in *Him alone* that one must put all one's hope.

*

All my power is with you to help you; open yourself with a calm confidence, have faith in the Divine Grace, and you will overcome all your difficulties.

*

Do not worry, only keep in you always the will to do things well.

*

Why accept the idea of being weak? It is this which is bad.

*

Yes, it is in a calm and patient confidence that lies the certitude of victory.

*

Confidence in the Divine I do not lack, but it is perhaps my ego which unceasingly says that I cannot accomplish what the Divine wants of me.

Yes, and as soon as the ego surrenders and abdicates, this fear disappears giving place to the calm assurance that nothing is impossible.

*

“You will overcome all your difficulties” — I repeat this; only my whole being does not accept it.

If you repeat it with sufficient constancy, the recalcitrant part will at last be convinced.

*

Yes, you are right to have hope; it is hope which builds happy futures.

*

I have quite forgotten my past.

Yes, one must forget one’s past.

*

But why torment yourself so much? Be calm, don’t get disturbed, remember that the conditions of our life are not quite ordinary conditions, and keep your trust in the Divine Power to organise all and do all through the human instruments which are open to His influence.

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Be with me, Mother, without You I am weak, very weak and fearful.

One must have no fear, victory is for him who is without fear; I am always with you to guide and protect you.

*

One must have no fear — fear is a bad counsellor; it acts like a magnet and attracts what we fear. One must, on the contrary, keep a calm certitude that sooner or later all will be well.

*

To be pessimistic has never been of any use except to attract towards oneself just the things one fears. One must, on the contrary, drive off all pessimistic thoughts and compel oneself to think only of what one wants to happen.

VIII

My adored Mother, Sri Aurobindo's last letter made me think much. The most obvious sign of the action of an adverse force — it is this that I want to learn to see in myself and others.

1st sign: One feels far away from Sri Aurobindo and me.

2nd: One loses confidence, begins to criticise, is not satisfied.

3rd: One revolts and sinks into falsehood.

*

Do not grieve. Always the same battle must be won several times, especially when it is waged against the hostile forces. That is why one must be armed with patience and keep faith in the final victory.

*

My beloved Mother, can the adverse forces act effectively against the terrestrial evolution without using a human being as an intermediary?

It is not impossible, but it is easier for them to find a human instrument.

*

It is good to be confident and to have a living and steady faith. But in the matter of the adverse forces, it is good to be always vigilant and sincere.

*

Mother, what attitude should I take towards women? There is a part in me which prompts me to go to X. This recalcitrant part advises me to do so, telling me that this is the best means of overcoming an attraction, whether small or great.

This is childish; it is always the same trap of the adverse forces; if, instead of expressing their advice under cleverly perverted forms, they were to speak of things as they are, it would come to something like this: “Continue to drink in order to stop being a drunkard” or better: “Continue to kill to stop being a murderer!”

*

One must never be afraid, and if the adverse forces try to lodge themselves in your lower nature, you have only to dislodge them, calling me to your help.

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Mother, last night I had a nightmare and was almost frightened.

One must never be afraid. Even in your sleep you must be able to remember me and call me to your help if there is some danger. You will see that the nightmares will vanish.

*

It seemed to me that there was someone in my room who wanted to suck my blood; I wanted to stretch my left hand to him so that he could do so.

If you start feeding the adverse forces, they will exact more and more and will never be satisfied.

*

Y told me that very often he becomes an instrument of the adverse forces.

Much of this is *his own imagination*; if he thought less of these so-called vital beings, most of them would be immediately dissolved.

*

If I can remain peaceful in the face of all circumstances, I can be sure that the hostile force is far from me.

Yes, on condition that the “peace” is not that of a *hardening* but of a conscious force.

*

Mother, I do not quite understand what a peace of “hardening” means.

I am speaking of the peace experienced by those who are utterly insensible and indifferent to the misfortunes of the world and

the suffering of others, those who have turned their hearts to stones and are incapable of compassion.

IX

*If I could detach myself entirely from this outer world,
if I could be quite alone, I would master this depression
which I cannot shake off.*

This is not at all correct; the experience of all recluses, all ascetics, proves indisputably the contrary. The difficulty comes from oneself, from one's own nature, and one takes it along wherever one goes, whatever the conditions one may be in. There is but one way of getting out of it — it is to conquer the difficulty, overcome one's lower nature. And is this not easier here, with a concrete and tangible help, than all alone, without anyone to shed light on the path and guide the uncertain footsteps?

*

*My darling Mamma, I want to lead a pure life and I shall
do all I can to progress towards the divine life.*

This does not depend so much on outer conditions, but above all on the inner state.

A pure being is always pure, in all circumstances.

*

*You will admit that one can't live with others without
being influenced more or less by them.*

No, this is wrong! It is true of the ordinary life but not of a yogi.

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother, if my company is not good for others, should I not dissociate myself from everyone?

It would be much better to dissociate yourself from the tendency to fall into your ordinary consciousness.

*

What will be the result if I meditate on the thought that there is no difference between a certain thing, no matter which, and me; for the Divine is as much present in that thing as in me?

Probably a disastrous result; that is, a passive opening to all sorts of influences, most of which are hardly commendable.

*

A yogi ought to accept and digest all dirt with a perfect equality.

Why? I don't see that this is necessary. The effort which would be needed to become immune from the effects of dirt can be utilized much more profitably elsewhere.

*

Mother dearest, You make me very happy and I would like to see everybody as happy as I.

Of course, this shows very good feelings. But a certain amount of knowledge must be added to these sentiments. For, to communicate peace and joy to others is not so easy, and unless one has within oneself *an unshakable peace and joy*, there is a great risk of losing what one has rather than passing it on to others.

*

Series Six – To a Young Sadhak

My heart is full of compassion for others and I am not insensible to their suffering, but what's the good of this feeling if I cannot come to their aid in their suffering?

One cannot help others to overcome their sorrows and sufferings unless one has overcome all this in oneself and is master of one's feelings and reactions.

*

It is to purify your own heart that you must work, instead of passing your time in judging what others do or don't do.

*

Yes, one must distrust superficial and baseless judgments.

*

It is just when one is innocent that one ought to be most indifferent to ill-treatment, because there is nothing to blame oneself for and one has the approbation of one's conscience to console oneself.

*

It would be much better for you not to busy yourself with what others say.

*

Surely those who have courage must have some for those who have none.

*

I nearly got angry and it was with an effort that I controlled myself.

Some Answers from the Mother

It is very good to control one's anger. Even if it were only to learn to do so, these contacts with others are useful.

*

I do not know of anything more foolish than these quarrels in which everybody is in the wrong. And is there anything more ridiculous than ruffled *amours-propres*?

*

In keeping quiet one never risks doing anything wrong, while one has nine chances out of ten of saying something stupid when one speaks.

*

It is never good to tell a lie, but here its results cannot but be disastrous, for falsehood is the very symbol of that which wants to oppose the divine work of Truth.

X

Health is the outer expression of a deep harmony, one must be proud of it and not despise it.

*

Why imagine always that one is ill or is going to be ill and thus open oneself to all kinds of bad suggestions? There is no reason to be ill and I don't see why you should be so.

*

Mother dearest, I have caught a cold. Should I take my bath as usual?

Do as you like, this is not of much importance; but what is important is to cast off fear. It is fear which makes one fall ill and it is fear which makes healing so difficult. All fear must be overcome and replaced by a complete trust in the divine Grace.

*

For several days there has been pain in the nape of the neck; I am tired of the remedies our dispensary gives me. I rely on Your Will alone to rid me of this illness.

One must have an unshakable faith to be able to do without medicines.

*

One must never lose hope or faith — there is nothing incurable, and no limit can be set to the power of the Divine.

*

One must find the inner peace and keep it constantly. In the force this peace brings, all these little miseries will disappear.

*

Mother, the inherent tendency of the material body is to dissolve, and the mind helps it; how will You be able to stop the natural propensity of my body to disintegration?

It must become aware of the immortality of the elements constituting it (which is a scientifically recognised fact), then it must submit itself to the influence and the will of the psychic being which is immortal in its very nature.

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Beloved Mother, do You grant that it is possible to do without food?

For food to be no longer necessary, the body would have to be completely transformed and no longer subject to any of the laws governing it at present.

*

I don't see why people should feel guilty because they are hungry. If food is prepared, it is for eating.

*

My most beloved Mother, I think it would be better to avoid a party of this kind.

Evidently, this creates an atmosphere in which food predominates; this is not very conducive to spiritual life.

XI

The vital is at once the place of desires and energies, impulses and passions, of cowardice, but also of heroism — to bridle it is to turn all this towards the divine Will and submit it to this Will.

*

The vital being seeks only power — material possession and terrestrial power.

This also is false. The higher part of the vital being, like the higher part of the mental being, aspires for the Divine and suffers when far from Him.

*

*This desire to live in an intellectual atmosphere —
doesn't it show that my mind can govern the vital?*

No, it only shows that in your consciousness the mind takes a bigger place than the vital. What I call the domination of the mind over the vital is when the latter takes no initiative, accepts no impulse which has not been first sanctioned by the mind, when no desire, no passion arises unless the mind thinks it good; and if an impulse of desire, passion or violence comes from outside, it is enough that the mind intervenes for it to be immediately controlled.

*

*Mother dearest, the vital desires will vanish as gradually
my body becomes weaker, won't they?*

Certainly not; quite on the contrary, to be able to conquer the desires of the vital one must have an excellent physical equilibrium and sound health.

*

In the vital world attraction and repulsion are the right and wrong sides of the same thing and always indicate an attachment. One must persistently turn away one's thought from its object.

*

Should one always avoid a circumstance which is conducive to undesirable impulses? Or should one rather accept the circumstance and try to be its master?

It is always better to avoid the temptation.

*

Some Answers from the Mother

One has only to persist with a calm confidence and the vital will stop going on strike.

*

Depression is always unreasonable and leads nowhere. It is the most subtle enemy of yoga.

XII

In Your Conversations You have said that the intellect is like an intermediary between the true knowledge and its realisation here below. Does it not follow that intellectual culture is indispensable for rising above the mind to find there the true knowledge?

Intellectual culture is indispensable for preparing a good mental instrument, large, supple and rich, but its action stops there.

In rising above the mind, it is more often a hindrance than a help, for, in general, a refined and educated mind finds its satisfaction in itself and rarely seeks to silence itself so as to be surpassed.

*

It is a passing impulse which pushes me so much to study.

So long as you need to form yourself, to build your brain, you will feel this strong urge to study; but when the brain is well formed, the taste for studies will gradually die away.

*

My beloved Mother, I want to follow a systematic course of metaphysics and ethics. I am also thinking of reading The Life Divine.

If you read metaphysics and ethics, you must do it just as *mental gymnastics* to give a little exercise to your brain, but never lose sight of the fact that *this is not a source of knowledge* and that it is not in this way that one can draw close to knowledge. Naturally, this does not hold good for *The Life Divine...*

*

In silence lies the source of the highest inspirations.

*

Identification with the Divine is our goal; I don't see why I am trying to know this or that.

It is not the work that is of importance but the spirit in which one does it. It is difficult to keep one's mind perfectly quiet; it is better to engage it in studies than in silly ideas or unhealthy dreamings.

*

I want to see what will happen to me if I stop reading completely.

It is difficult to keep one's mind always fixed on the same thing, and if it is not given enough work to occupy it, it begins to become restless. So I think it is better to choose one's books carefully rather than stop reading altogether.

*

I am reading a book on cars, but I read it hastily; I skip the descriptions of complicated mechanisms.

If you don't want to learn a thing thoroughly, conscientiously and in all its details, it is better not to take it up at all. It is a great mistake to think that a little superficial and incomplete

Some Answers from the Mother

knowledge of things can be of any use whatsoever; it is good for nothing except making people conceited, for they imagine they know and in fact know nothing.

*

It is very difficult to choose games which are useful and beneficial for a child. It asks for much consideration and reflection, and all that one does unthinkingly may have unhappy consequences.

*

I am reading Molière; his writings are light.

Not as much as they seem to be. There is a deep and very wise observation in the comedies of Molière.

*

I have just finished Salammbô;² I did not find any ideal character in it.

It is not a book of ideas; it is only for the beauty of its form and style that it is remarkable.

*

When one reads a dirty book, an obscene novel, does not the vital enjoy it through the mind?

In the mind also there are perversions. It is a rather poor and unrefined vital which can take pleasure in such things!

² A novel by Gustave Flaubert.

XIII

The students talk so much in the class that I have to scold them often.

It is not with severity but with *self-mastery* that children are controlled.

*

I must tell you that if a teacher wants to be respected, he must *be respectable*. X is not the only one to say that you use violence to make yourself obeyed; nothing is less respectable. You must first control yourself and never use brute force to impose your will.

*

I have always thought that something in the teacher's character was responsible for the indiscipline of his students.

*

I hope you will give me precise instructions which will help me keep order in my classes.

The most important is to master yourself and never lose your temper. If you don't have control over yourself, how can you expect to control others, above all, children, who feel it immediately when someone is not master of himself?

*

The students cannot learn their lessons even when they have their books.

One must have a lot of patience with young children, and repeat the same thing to them several times, explaining it to them in various ways. It is only gradually that it enters their mind.