

Series Ten

Letters to a Young Captain

To a young captain in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Department of Physical Education. He began writing to the Mother at the age of nineteen.

Sweet Mother,

On the night of Friday the 8th, I had a very peculiar dream. As I could not tell it to You at the Playground, I am going to tell You now.

It was a very fine day — very special. There was an important meeting at the Playground, so I was hurrying there. But near the Playground in front of Standard Stores, the road was covered with innumerable snakes. I was taken aback and rather afraid. So I was about to go round by another way to the Playground. But just then something spoke to me within: “What! Are you afraid of snakes? Come, take courage and walk through them. They will not harm you.” I walked through them quite confidently. Not one of them disturbed me nor did I disturb them. When I reached the Playground, I started talking to a friend. Suddenly he jumped back in fright and said: “Be careful, there is a snake coiled around your arm, and another around your other arm, and others around your legs and ankles.” Though I had not felt their presence till then, I was not in the least alarmed. I took them off one by one and threw them away. One snake was dead because I had stepped on it.

This is all I can remember clearly. I cannot remember exactly what happened at the Playground afterwards.

Mother, what do You think of this dream?

Some Answers from the Mother

The dream is indeed very interesting. Snakes usually signify bad thoughts or bad will from people around you — or an adverse attack that can manifest as an illness. But, as you clearly experienced in your dream, if you are not frightened and go on your way unperturbed, nothing bad will happen to you.

With my blessings.

13 October 1954

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Sweet Mother,

From time to time there is an upsurge of bad thoughts; the mind becomes like a mire of passions and I wallow in it like a worm. After a while I wake up and regret my thoughts. But this kind of struggle keeps on recurring. Please help me to get out of it.

You must continue to fight against the bad thoughts until you gain a total victory. My help is always with you as well as my blessings.

26 January 1961

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Sweet Mother,

Here our activities are so varied that it is difficult to stick to one thing till the end. Perhaps that is why we are not able to go beyond a mediocre average. Or is it because of our lack of solid concentration?

The cause of mediocre work is neither the variety nor the number of activities, but the lack of power of concentration.

One must learn to concentrate and do all that one does with full concentration.

4 July 1961

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Sweet Mother,

It really is a problem to know how to create interest in the students, whether in games, athletics or gymnastics. Even our own enthusiasm dwindles when we see their lack of interest in everything.

The interest of the students is proportionate to the *true capacity* of the teacher.

12 July 1961

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(Regarding The Lost Footsteps by Silviu Craciunas) This book shows how Sri Aurobindo is working in every corner of the world. We who are here in the Ashram still haven't even had a glimpse of him.

There are people here who see him and are constantly in contact with him. They are those who love him sincerely and sufficiently to live according to his ideal.

14 July 1961

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(Regarding the Mother's message of March 1961 to the captains; in it she asks them to "be the elite") We are very far from what You ask of us, at least I am. It is a most arduous task and it will take time, a long time, but what can be done at present! To change our consciousness and become an elite will take a lot of time. At present, we are on the same level as our students, so the immediate problem is not solved. How can we create an interest in them for each thing and every day?

This is even more impossible than to change and become an elite. So the best thing to do is to set to work immediately. The rest is simply an excuse that our laziness gives to itself.

15 July 1961

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Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

I went to work only for one hour, because I had too much work at home.

This is not good; the collective work should not suffer because of personal work.

19 July 1961

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Sweet Mother,

When I came to You this evening for “Prosperity”,¹ I felt a sort of uneasiness — as if I had done something wrong — instead of feeling joy at seeing You. One ought to be eager to receive Your blessings, but why do I not have that feeling?

There must still be some insincerity in your being, hidden in a dark corner, something that does not want to change and is afraid of the Light.

1 August 1961

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Sweet Mother,

Today I did not have that feeling of apprehension about coming to You, but I was in a passive state. I want, on the contrary, to feel an intense joy, a moment of ecstasy. How can I obtain it?

Come with the aspiration to give yourself, to offer your whole being, without reserve, to the Divine Grace, and you will feel the felicity for which you aspire.

6 August 1961

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¹ On the first of each month, the sadhaks received “Prosperity” — their basic material requirements.

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Sweet Mother,

I want an electric lamp in the corridor of my room.

It would be more proper to write (and above all, to think):
“Would it be possible to have an electric lamp in the corridor?”

The ego would do well to become a little more modest.

13 August 1961

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Sweet Mother,

I have certain things to confess to You, but I cannot bring myself to do it. What shall I do? Confess or let past things be effaced by forgetting the past?

If you can really allow them to be effaced and cease to exist, even in your memory, it is better.

3 September 1961

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Sweet Mother,

You told us: “All of you here are taking life very lightly, you are amusing yourselves all the time, you are so self-centred.” It is quite true that we are taking life very lightly, and it has become so natural that we believe it to be the right attitude. And we are self-centred. How can we get out of this trap? In any case, the dose You gave us this morning was really just right. I feel very happy.

The first point is not to place oneself in thought, feeling or action *at the centre of the universe* so that it exists only in terms of oneself — one is part of the universe. One can unite with it, but the Supreme Lord alone is its centre because He surpasses and contains it.

19 September 1961

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Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

In Aphorism 95, Sri Aurobindo says that it is only by renunciation or by perfect satisfaction of desire that one can have the total experience of God.² But isn't the second method (perfect satisfaction of desire) very dangerous, for is it possible to satisfy man's desire?

Elsewhere he says explicitly that it is useless to try to satisfy desire, for desire is insatiable and can never be satisfied.

What he writes ought not to be taken separately; it is always part of a whole which is a synthesis of all opposites.

27 September 1961

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Sweet Mother,

We speak very often of the psychic and the soul, but I understand nothing about them. What are these two things and how can one experience them?

Sri Aurobindo has written a lot on this subject (in his letters) and I too have explained everything in the book *Education*. One has to read, study and, *above all, practise*.

4 October 1961

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Sweet Mother,

I have noticed one thing: When I sit for a few minutes and make an effort to concentrate before going to sleep, the next day I wake up quite early and am quite fresh. I concentrate on the tiny luminous tip of an

² "Only by perfect renunciation of desire or by perfect satisfaction of desire can the utter embrace of God be experienced, for in both ways the essential precondition is effected, — desire perishes."

Thoughts and Aphorisms, in SABCL, Vol. 17, p. 89.

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incense-stick. But how is it that I wake up early because of that? There is no relation between these two things!

On the contrary, there is a very concrete relation. When you concentrate before sleeping, then in your sleep you remain in contact with the Divine force; but when you fall heavily to sleep without any preliminary concentration, you sink into the unconscious and the sleep is more tiring than restful, and it is difficult to come out of this sluggishness.

8 October 1961

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I would like you to look attentively into yourself and try to explain to me what exactly it is that you enjoy in detective stories.

16 October 1961

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Sweet Mother,

I read them as a relaxation. In detective stories — especially Perry Mason — there is always a courtroom scene in which the lawyer Perry Mason seems certain to lose his case; his client is accused of murder, all the evidence is against him, but the master-stroke of the lawyer Perry Mason changes the situation. Throughout the story there are mysteries, and the trial is like the mental acrobatics of a master gymnast. But each time I finish one of his books, I feel that I have gained nothing, learned nothing new — that it was a waste of time.

It is not *absolutely* useless. You probably had a great deal of *tamas* in your mind, and the mental acrobatics of the author shakes up this *tamas* a little and awakens the mind. But this cannot last for long and soon you must turn to higher things.

16 October 1961

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Some Answers from the Mother

(After seeing the Mother on Lakshmi Puja Day) I await the day when this joy and this felicity will be established in me for ever. Now, it is only a dream and a passing experience like today's. But I hope to realise it for ever with Your Help.

Persist in your aspiration and the dream will be realised.

23 October 1961

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Sweet Mother,

I have noticed something which applies to all of us; it is that we take part in as many items as possible in the 2nd December programme.³ Would it not be better to choose one or two items and give a very good demonstration in them, rather than to do several in a mediocre way?

Each one acts according to his nature and if he (or she) courageously and sincerely follows the law of that nature, he or she acts according to truth. Thus, it is impossible to judge and decide for others. One can know only for oneself, and even then one has to be very *sincere* so as not to deceive oneself.

4 November 1961

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Sweet Mother,

In Aphorism 133, Sri Aurobindo says that "the gods were able to accept only the pleasant burden of His love and kindlier rapture."⁴ So the gods are cowards! Where then is their greatness and their splendour? Why do we

³ The annual demonstration of physical culture, held at the Ashram Sportsground.

⁴ "The Titans are stronger than the gods because they have agreed with God to front and bear the burden of His wrath and enmity; the gods were able to accept only the pleasant burden of His love and kindlier rapture."

Thoughts and Aphorisms, in SABCL, Vol. 17, p. 94.

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worship inferior entities? And the Titans must be the most lovable sons of the Divine!

What Sri Aurobindo writes here is a paradox to awaken sleepy minds. But we must understand all the irony in these sayings, and especially the intention behind his words. Moreover, cowards or not, I see no need for us to worship the gods, great or small. Our adoration ought to go only to the Supreme Lord, who is one in all things and all beings.

6 November 1961

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Sweet Mother,

For a long time I have noticed that I am rather shy. I always have an inferiority complex. I think I am afraid that people will discover my ignorance. Why am I like that? And how can I come out of it?

Behind all that and this famous inferiority complex, there is the ego and its vanity which wants to cut a good figure and be appreciated by others. But if all your activity were an offering to the Divine, you would not care at all about the appreciation of others.

14 November 1961

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Sweet Mother,

You have often told us that our activities should be an offering to the Divine. What does this mean exactly, and how can it be done? For instance, when we play tennis or basketball, how can we do it as an offering? Mental formations are not enough, of course!

It means that what you do should not be done with a personal, egoistic aim, for success, for glory, for gain, for material profit or out of pride, but as a service and an offering, in order to become

Some Answers from the Mother

more conscious of the divine will and to give yourself more entirely to it, until you have made enough progress to know and *to feel* that it is the Divine who acts in you, His force that impels you and His will that supports you — not just a mental knowledge, but the sincerity of a state of consciousness and the power of a living experience.

For that to be possible, all egoistic motives and all egoistic reactions must disappear.

20 November 1961

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Sweet Mother,

I pray to You, on behalf of everyone, that this evening's demonstration may be a success. Everyone thinks it will be the opposite. It is true that our performance is not up to the mark. I hope and I pray to You that the performance this evening may be at its best. Sweet Mother, take our actions and guide us. You told us You would be there — if only I had eyes to see You!

What I saw on the 26th was satisfactory (of course it can always be better) and I have heard *a great many compliments* about the 2nd December performance. You should not listen to people who only know how to criticise. Exaggerated criticism is not an aid to progress.

2 December 1961

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Sweet Mother,

I am very lazy and I lack the fervour and perseverance to continue on the chosen path. I am like a flame that is roused by the wind and rises upwards, but falls back dead or dying as soon as the wind drops. Vigilant, that is what I should be. But how?

All the psychological qualities can be cultivated as the muscles

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are — by regular, daily exercise. Above all, turn towards the Divine Force in a sincere aspiration and implore It to deliver you from your limitations. If you are *sincere* in your will to progress, you are sure to advance.

21 January 1962

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Sweet Mother,

I was surprised to see this new ritual, “Sri Aurobindo sharanam mama”,⁵ introduced into the cemetery ceremonies. X stands in meditation in front of the body and pronounces the phrase, “Sri Aurobindo sharanam mama”, and the others, standing round the body, must repeat it after him. This is done a hundred times. Personally, I don’t like this ceremony. I find it empty of feeling. I don’t like Sri Aurobindo’s name to be invoked without feeling and turned into a ritual. It is much better to read one of Your prayers and then invoke the Divine Grace in silence, each in his own way, for the departed person, as was done before. That is my opinion.

The ceremony in itself is only of secondary importance. It is merely a form and more a matter of custom than anything else.

What is important is to infuse into whatever ceremony one adopts the sincere fervour and ardent aspiration which give life to any ceremony, whatever it may be, and yet do not depend on it.

6 February 1962

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Sweet Mother,

Sri Aurobindo says that five thousand years have passed since the great battle of Kurukshetra was fought. But the benign influence of Sri Krishna’s political genius

⁵ Sri Aurobindo is my refuge.

Some Answers from the Mother

ended only yesterday with Rani Lakshmbai.⁶ After that, to protect India and the world anew, there had to be a Purna Avatar.⁷ This Avatar will awaken the Brahmatej⁸, which is dormant. Sri Aurobindo also says that it is only in the Kaliyuga⁹ that the Divine manifests fully because man is in great danger in this age. And here he is! He himself reveals the great secret: the Divine has fully manifested in India. But he has the modesty not to say that he himself is this manifestation!

Those who accomplish the work are not in the habit of boasting. They keep their energy for the task and leave the glory of the results to the Eternal Lord.

6 March 1962

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Sweet Mother,

I can tell You this without vanity: I am much better than I was before; but all the same I am quite far, perhaps very far, from the Ideal You have given us. This does not discourage me, for I have full confidence in You.

Yes, you must persevere with courage and sincerity. You are sure to succeed one day.

2 September 1962

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Sweet Mother,

We have had a discussion among friends about the problem and various possible methods of physical education. The fundamental problem is this: how can we

⁶ The Queen of Jhansi who died on the battlefield in 1858 while fighting British troops.

⁷ Full or perfect Divine incarnation.

⁸ Power of the Spirit.

⁹ The "Iron Age" in which we live.

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establish a programme that will satisfy everyone and be as effective as possible for all the members? Are the tournaments necessary? Should there be no compulsion whatever? And if complete freedom is given, will it be practical? And so on. It is a subject on which it is not easy to find a solution satisfactory enough for everyone, unless the Mother Herself intervenes.

It is impossible. Each one has his own taste and his own temperament. Nothing can be done without *discipline* — the whole of life is a discipline.

20 September 1962

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*Sweet Mother,
Is it bad to go to the cinema in town?*

For those who want to do yoga, it is *very bad*. Moreover, I have already said this a considerable number of times, and if you do not know it, it is because you find it more convenient to forget it.

27 September 1962

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*Sweet Mother,
There are too many tight knots in the immense organisation of this Ashram. When will the promised day come when there will be nothing but unmixed harmony, joy and peace?*

If each one were more concerned with correcting his own faults than with criticising those of others, the work would go more quickly.

29 September 1962

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Some Answers from the Mother

A little sincere and regular practice is worth more than a lot of short-lived resolutions.

2 October 1962

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Sweet Mother,

I heard this morning that X was very severely beaten by Y. I don't think it is fair at all.

One can speak only of what one has seen with one's own eyes — and even then... What knowledge do you possess that gives you the right to judge? Only the Lord sees and knows — He alone is the Truth.

You ought to study Sri Aurobindo's aphorisms a little more carefully. It would cure you of passing judgments.

15 October 1962

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Sweet Mother,

I had written a letter to the Mother asking why She had not given Her darshan to Z. But now I am afraid that Mother may be angry at my audacity in writing such a letter. Because it is none of my business!

I read your letter and I was not at all angry. But Z was not at all ready for a darshan.

19 October 1962

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(Regarding a threat by China to occupy disputed borderland in northern Kashmir and northeastern India) Sometimes I have the impression that our leaders do not seem to have the sort of backbone displayed by Kennedy with his decision about Cuba.

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This kind of comment is quite out of place at the moment. One should never criticise someone unless one has proved beyond dispute that in the same circumstances one can do better than he.

Do you feel capable of being an unequalled Prime Minister of India? I reply: “Certainly not”, and I advise you to keep silent and remain calm.

24 October 1962

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(Regarding a prayer for Kali Puja Day)

It is all right, my children, but it is not enough to pray; you must also make a persevering effort.

26 October 1962

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Sweet Mother,

In a discussion with a friend about our physical education programme and the countless other activities we have here, he asked me: “Can you give me a valid example of even one person who takes part in so many activities and maintains a fairly high standard — one single person in the whole world?”

Do not forget — all of you who are here — that we want to realise something which does not yet exist upon earth; so it is absurd to seek elsewhere for an example of what we want to do.

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He also told me this: “Mother says that there is full freedom and every facility for those who are gifted in a particular subject and want to pursue it to the full. But where is this freedom to become, for instance, a

Some Answers from the Mother

great musician?" Sweet Mother, can you please say a few words on the subject of this freedom?

The freedom I speak of is the freedom to follow the will of the soul, not all the whims of the mind and vital.

The freedom I speak of is an austere truth which strives to surmount all the weaknesses and desires of the lower, ignorant being.

The freedom I speak of is the freedom to consecrate oneself wholly and without reserve to one's highest, noblest, divinest aspiration.

Who among you sincerely follows this path? It is easy to judge, but more difficult to understand, and far more difficult still to realise.

18 November 1962

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(Regarding the captain's estimate of someone)

Remember that all these individual virtues and faults are only the deceptive appearance of a great play of universal forces which one does not understand.

5 January 1963

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(Regarding a friend)

Find your happiness and your joy in the very fact of loving, and it will help you in your inner progress; because if you are *sincere*, you will one day realise that it is the Divine in her that you love and that the outer person is merely a pretext.

27 January 1963

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Sweet Mother,

What is the difference between meditating here in my room and going to meditate at the Playground with everyone else?

Is it better to meditate there or here in my room?

Meditate where you meditate best — that is to say, wherever you are most silent and calm.

31 January 1963

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(Regarding a bad dream)

I call that mental fermentation. As soon as your waking consciousness falls asleep or leaves your body, the brain-cells you have not taken the trouble to quiet down begin to fidget restlessly and produce what is called a dream, but it is nothing more than disorderly activity. It has no meaning and can serve only one purpose: to make you aware of what goes on in your head.

19 March 1963

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Sweet Mother,

I have received a certain sum of money. I want to offer it to You, and if I need anything I will ask You for it; in that way You can decide what is necessary or best for me. But I am advised to keep as much as I want for my personal needs and to offer the rest to You. Otherwise people will say that I ask for anything I want just because I have given You a little money. Mother, what do You want me to do?

Do as you feel — and you may be sure that whatever you do, people will always have something to say.

Some Answers from the Mother

Besides, who is perfectly disinterested? One should not pretend to be what one is not. It is better to be frank than hypocritical.

12 April 1963

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*Sweet Mother,
Is it right to pray to the Mother for little things and
selfish gains?*

It all depends on one's point of view. It is quite possible that one will obtain the thing one has prayed for. But for spiritual progress, it is harmful.

4 May 1963

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*Sweet Mother,
What is the true significance of marriage?*

It has hardly any *true* significance — it is a social custom for the perpetuation of the species.

10 May 1963

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*Sweet Mother,
We see too many films these days and I fail to see
how they educate us!*

When one has the true attitude, everything can be an opportunity to learn.

In any case, this abundance should make you understand that the desire to see films, which is so imperious in some people, is just as pernicious as any other desire.

11 May 1963

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Sweet Mother,

Each time I have encountered an obstacle in my life, each time I have been deprived of some happiness—some apparent happiness—a consolation has come immediately to dispel my psychological pain. For something tells me: “All that happens is done for your own good and is done by the Divine Grace.” Is it good, is it healthy to think like this?

Not only is it right, good and healthy to think like this, but it is an absolutely indispensable attitude if one wants to advance on the spiritual path. As a matter of fact, it is the first step without which one cannot advance at all. That is why I always say: “Whatever you do, do the *best* you can, and leave the result to the Lord; then your heart will be at peace.”

13 May 1963

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Sweet Mother,

Can the lines of our hands reflect our past, present and future life?

Yes, certainly, for someone who knows how to see, and X is very gifted.

15 May 1963

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Sweet Mother,

I have often noticed that the work we do is done much better and more quickly than if it were done by paid workers. I don't know why!

Because you are more conscious, or rather less unconscious.

23 May 1963

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Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

Girls are always at a disadvantage: they cannot do what they want, as boys can.

Why not?

There are hundreds of proofs to the contrary.

31 May 1963

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Sweet Mother,

What is the best relationship between two human beings? Mother and son? Brother, friend or lover, etc?

All the relationships are good *in principle* and each one expresses a mode of the Eternal. But each can be perverted and become bad due to the selfish falsehood of human nature which prevents the vibrations of love from manifesting in their purity.

4 June 1963

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Sweet Mother,

About the hero of the film Reach for the Sky, I said that nothing could ever discourage him. For even after having lost both legs in an accident, he vowed that he would continue his career as a pilot. He is a man of fantastic vitality, full of energy...

That is exactly the kind of determination one must have to practise the yoga of integral perfection.

7 June 1963

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Sweet Mother,

*There are moments when I feel it would be better
to sit silently instead of reading or doing something else.
But I am afraid of wasting time. What should I do?*

It all depends on the quality of the silence — if it is a luminous silence, full of force and conscious concentration, it is good. If it is a tamasic and unconscious silence, it is harmful.

10 June 1963

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Sweet Mother,

*After a long time I had a beautiful dream in which I
saw the Mother and received Her Blessings.*

It is not a dream, but the result of the preceding meditation and of your aspiration.

12 June 1963

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Sweet Mother,

*I have too much “grey” matter in my head, which
prevents me from thinking clearly and grasping new
ideas quickly. How can I free myself from this?*

By studying much, by reflecting much, by doing intellectual exercises. For instance, state a general idea clearly, then state the opposite idea, then look for the synthesis of both — that is, find a third idea which harmonises the other two.

25 June 1963

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(On reading novels)

Why do you read novels? It is a stupid occupation and a waste of time. It is certainly one of the reasons why your brain is still in a muddle and lacks clarity.

27 June 1963

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Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

Man is so weak that he is influenced even by the wind that blows about him, by a book he reads or a picture he sees. He is most vulnerable.

That happens when he has not taken care to organise his conscious being around the psychic centre, which is the Truth of his being.

28 June 1963

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Sweet Mother,

Most people here quote the Mother to suit their own convenience.

Before criticising others, it is better to be sure that one is perfectly sincere oneself.

30 June 1963

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Sweet Mother,

A few days ago I noticed something very odd in the children of Group A2: the boys don't want to work with the girls; they don't even want to stand side by side. They cannot work together. How did this idea of difference come to these little children who are barely eleven years old! It is strange.

It is atavistic and comes from the subconscious.

This instinct is based both on masculine pride, the foolish idea of superiority, and on the still more foolish fear due to the idea that woman is a dangerous being who entices you into sin. In children, all this is still subconscious, but it influences their actions.

3 July 1963

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Sweet Mother,

I caused a sensation with my new clothes! Blue shorts and a grey shirt. X was shocked to see me dressed like that.

How frivolous and superficial people must be to attach importance to such things!! Even so, if you wore those clothes in your capacity as a captain, you did wrong, for the captains have a uniform which they should wear when they are acting as captains.

4 July 1963

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Sweet Mother,

There are moments when one feels a kind of emptiness within; one is dejected and lonely — it is because one wants to be loved.

Or *better*, it is because one is awaking to the need of knowing one's soul and uniting with the Divine.

5 July 1963

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Sweet Mother,

I sit down every day to meditate, but I am afraid that this ten minutes' meditation has become merely mechanical. I want a dynamic meditation, but how to have it?

Become *sincere*.

6 July 1963

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Sweet Mother,

This creation has a purpose — therefore is it possible that even the most “insignificant” individual has come

Some Answers from the Mother

*upon earth to fulfil a mission? That is not my conception
— what are beggars and people like that doing?*

Who said that? And what “mission” are you referring to? The creation is a *single whole* advancing as a totality towards its single goal — the Divine — through a collective evolution which is continuous and endless.

7 July 1963

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Sweet Mother,

*I have heard that You have written somewhere that each person here in the Ashram represents a particular human difficulty, and that this difficulty will be mastered and transformed in him in his lifetime.*¹⁰

I have never made this statement.

Things are not so cut and dried as the mind thinks and even desires in order to simplify the problem.

There is an almost infinite variety of shades and combinations of character, and although there are categories of very similar types, no two cases are identical.

One is aware of one’s difficulties only insofar as one can change them and at the moment when one can make the change.

8 July 1963

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Sweet Mother,

Suddenly I feel very happy, my heart is filled with an inexpressible joy, but this experience does not last very

¹⁰ The Mother underlined the phrase “in his lifetime”.

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long. I have often tried to observe and find out the cause of this fleeting joy, but in vain.

Because you are looking for the cause outside, around you, whereas it is *within*.

11 July 1963

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Sweet Mother,

You have explained that this separation of girls and boys is atavistic, but it remains to ask You what we captains should do about it. Personally, I think it is better to close one's eyes to it, but there are others who prefer to give advice or even to scold. I think that by closing one's eyes to it, one minimises the importance of the problem and thus this idea of difference between girls and boys will be less striking. What do You think?

One cannot make a general rule; everything depends on the case and the occasion. Both methods have their good and bad points, their advantages and drawbacks. For the captains, the main thing is to have tact and sufficient inner perception to intervene when necessary or to close one's eyes when it is preferable not to see.

15 July 1963

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Sweet Mother,

What do You mean by "an ignorant goodwill and an indolent energy"?

(1) Goodwill means wanting to do good always. The only true "good" is the will of the Supreme Lord. Do you know what the Lord's will is, always, at every moment and in all circumstances? No, so you are ignorant of what "good" is — therefore: ignorant goodwill.

Some Answers from the Mother

(2) The very nature of energy is to be inexhaustible, un-
failing, tireless. Are you never tired? Yes, very often — therefore:
indolent energy.

17 July 1963

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Sweet Mother,

*Would it not be better to have a basic discipline here
instead of so much freedom, a freedom we are not able
to profit by?*

You say this, but you are one of those who revolt (at least in
thought) against the very little discipline that is demanded when
it is utterly indispensable, as in physical education, for example.

21 July 1963

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Sweet Mother,

*Why do I hesitate to ask You for money? What pre-
vents me from doing so? Am I still not intimate enough
with You, or is there another reason? I do not understand
myself.*

It is probably a kind of inner discretion; it is rather a good
sign, because this kind of discretion comes from the psychic
consciousness which would rather give than *ask*.

24 July 1963

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Sweet Mother,

*I still lack confidence in my work. I am too shy.
I think that in order to progress one should be a little
bolder.*

It is not bolder you should be, but persistent and persevering.

27 July 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

X told us the favourite story of Dr. Y, the mathematics teacher: “A sculptor was working on a block of stone near a village. One by one the villagers gathered round the sculptor, curious to see why he was breaking the stone. After much labour the work was finished and a masterpiece came to light — a dancing goddess instead of a block of stone stood there in front of the sculptor. All the villagers around him who had watched him work were astonished, and they marvelled at the sight of the beautiful figure which had emerged from the stone. So they asked the sculptor: “How did you know that this figure was there in the stone?”

The question is admirable — and if the sculptor had been witty, he would have replied: “Because I saw it inside.”

11 August 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

Your remarks often amuse me.

You would do better to make an effort to understand them, for behind the words there is always something profound to be understood.

12 August 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

This morning I saw a man with protruding ribs, deeply depressed hips and twisted legs. It was a pitiful sight. One wonders why God has made all these deformations in Nature. The only answer — which answers

Some Answers from the Mother

nothing — is that it is “the Divine’s play”. It is incomprehensible.

That is an easy answer which one gives when one will not or cannot take the trouble to understand.

But if one rises above the individual mentality and enters into the consciousness of Unity, then one can understand.

18 August 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

What does “Yoga” mean and how many among us are practising it?

Why do you ask me this question? All those who are here should *at least* know what yoga means — as for practising it, that is another matter!...

19 August 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

I feel miserable because I asked the Mother for incense. It would be much better to buy it from the market, for She does not like her children to beg.

To ask from me is not begging and you may do so whenever you really need something. But at the same time, you must be prepared not to receive it and not to get upset if I fail to give it. In this case, I said that you should be given some incense, but I am not sure if it has been done. It is X who keeps it and you should ask him for it.

22 August 1963

*

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

Sweet Mother,

Our teacher Y gave us a talk in a grave and significant tone: “Be prepared to go through hard tests, we are on the eve of something very difficult and dangerous.” But he did not explain.

It is a pity he did not explain his thought, because I don't know what he wanted to say — probably he wanted to caution you against your light-heartedness, your air of indifference, your carelessness and laxity.

All of you young people here have had a very easy life, and instead of taking advantage of it to concentrate your efforts on spiritual progress, you have enjoyed yourselves as much as you could without creating too much scandal, and your vigilance has been lulled to sleep.

Y probably spoke as he did in order to reawaken it.

27 August 1963

*

(Regarding someone's observations on the captain's character)

Everything people say is of little importance, because human judgments are always partial and therefore ignorant.

To know oneself, one must look at oneself with a higher and deeper consciousness which can discern the true causes of reactions and feelings.

A superficial observation cannot help. And so long as one is not in contact with one's psychic being, it would be better to strive always to do as well as possible and be as good as one can, instead of passing one's time in useless analysis.

12 September 1963

*

Some Answers from the Mother

(Regarding X, who related her misfortunes to the captain, blaming herself for all her troubles) To console her, I told her that blaming oneself was perhaps not always saintly or healthy.

It is X who is spiritually right and you who are wrong with a superficial and ignorant so-called “reason”.

When something goes wrong, one must always find the reason in oneself, not superficially but deep inside oneself, and not in order to uselessly bewail the fault, but to cure it by calling to one’s aid the all-powerful force of the Divine.

To be sure of making myself clearly understood, I will add that it is not due to any fault of hers that he is inconstant and fickle — it is his nature to be like that and he acts according to his nature — but if she suffers and is unhappy because of what he does, then it is her own fault, for it means that her own feeling is tainted with egoism. It is this egoism that she must conquer, and as soon as she does she will no longer suffer.

17 September 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

I have again received an invitation for dinner. One cannot refuse if one is invited, can one?

No, unless there are serious reasons for doing so. I am not speaking of the outward act — whether one eats here or there comes to the same thing — I am speaking of the inner attitude, of the excessive importance one gives to food, and of greediness.

21 September 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

If I look at my whole life and its circumstances, I am very happy, but I am not satisfied. Often I am

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

plunged into an unbearable melancholy. What should I do?

True happiness does not depend on the external circumstances of life. One can obtain true happiness and keep it constantly only by discovering one's psychic being and uniting with it.

22 September 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

I often remember a poem by Francis Thompson and its refrain:

*“For though I knew His love who followèd
Yet was I sore adread*

Lest having Him, I must have naught beside.”

That is our malady!

Yes, that is what Sri Aurobindo has written many times; man clings to his misery, his pettiness, his weakness, his ignorance and his limits — that is why he does not change.

24 September 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

I am not properly prepared for the 1st December performance,¹¹ and, what is more, I don't feel at all enthusiastic.

From the moment one has decided and accepted to do something, it must be done as well as one can.

One can find in everything a chance to progress in consciousness and self-mastery. And this effort for progress immediately makes the thing interesting, no matter what it is.

26 September 1963

*

¹¹ The annual cultural programme.

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

In Aphorism 172, Sri Aurobindo has said: "Law released into freedom is the liberator."¹² What does that mean? How can law be released into freedom? By law we understand something determined and fixed. Or is it a flexibility that is required, as opposed to rigidity: law that will be free to mould itself according to circumstances?

I regret to have to tell you that you have understood absolutely nothing of what Sri Aurobindo has written — for you have tried to understand with your superficial mind, while what Sri Aurobindo has said comes from the highest intellectual light, far above the mind. All I can tell you, which perhaps will put you on the right track, is that behind law there is a spirit of order and organisation. But law itself is something fixed and therefore contrary to the highest truth. If the same spirit of order and organisation is put at the service of freedom, it can become a means of attaining liberation, that is to say, union with the Truth.

29 September 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

Sri Aurobindo writes in one of his aphorisms: "Those who are deficient in the free, full and intelligent observation of a self-imposed law, must be placed in subjection to the will of others."¹³ Mother, I am one of those. Will You take me and discipline me?

My child, that is exactly what I have been trying to do for quite

¹² "Law cannot save the world, therefore Moses' ordinances are dead for humanity and the Shastra of the Brahmins is corrupt and dying. Law released into freedom is the liberator. Not the Pundit, but the Yogin, not monasticism, but the inner renunciation of desire and ignorance and egoism."

Thoughts and Aphorisms, in SABCL, Vol. 17, p. 100.

¹³ *Thoughts and Aphorisms*, in SABCL, Vol. 17, p. 99.

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a long time, especially since I have been receiving your notebook and correcting it.

It is with that disciplinary aim that I asked you to write one single sentence a day — it did not have to be long, but it ought to have been *free from mistakes* — alas!

Up till now, I have hardly succeeded — your sentences are often long and unclear, others are short, but *all* contain mistakes and often, very often, the *same mistakes* of gender, agreement and conjugation which I have corrected many times.

One would think that even if you read your notebook when I return it to you, you do not study it and try to use it as a means to make progress.

To discipline one's life is not easy, even for those who are strong, severe with themselves, courageous and enduring.

But before trying to discipline one's whole life, one should at least try to discipline *one* activity, and persist until one succeeds.

13 October 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

I have formed the bad habit of nearly always being late everywhere.

There is no habit that cannot be changed.

14 October 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

It seems that a list of books (English classics) was sent to You for Your approval, but that You wish only the works of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo to be read. You have even remarked that to read these old classics is to lower the level of one's consciousness.

Some Answers from the Mother

Mother, do You advise this only for those who are practising yoga or for everybody?

First of all, what has been reported is not correct. Secondly, the advice is adapted to each case and cannot be made a general rule.

12 November 1963

*

(Written by the Mother at the beginning of a notebook containing quotations from Sri Aurobindo's Savitri)

Some extracts from *Savitri*, that marvellous prophetic poem which will be humanity's guide towards its future realisation.

27 November 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

I am very irregular in my studies; I don't know what to do.

Shake off your "tamas" a little — otherwise you will become a blockhead!

27 December 1963

*

Sweet Mother,

The ardour of making an effort is waning. I feel contented. But time passes so quickly that one feels one has not made the most out of what is given to us.

That proves that life is too easy here and that for the most part you are all too tamasic to make an effort unless goaded by the difficulties of ordinary life. Only a very ardent aspiration can remedy this deadly condition. But the aspiration is absent and your soul is asleep!

2 January 1964

*

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

1964

Bonne Année

I hope that this new year will see the reawakening of your soul and the awakening in your consciousness of a will to progress.

3 January 1964

*

I have kept your notebook in the hope of finding time to read and correct it. But the weeks go by and I see that it is impossible. I am therefore returning it to you without having read it, and I ask you not to send it again until it is possible for me to start looking at it once more. Continue your translation of the Aphorisms; I shall send you more at a time for correction.

My blessings are always with you.

17 February 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

You blessed me that I may be born to the true life, but what are the conditions needed to be born to that life and how can they be fulfilled?

The first condition is to decide not to live for oneself any more, but to live exclusively for the Divine.

Naturally, this decision should be renewed every day and manifested in a constant and effective will.

29 April 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

“Not to live for oneself” is understandable and one can try to put it into practice; but what does “to live exclusively for the Divine” mean exactly? For me it is

Some Answers from the Mother

only an idea mechanically repeated by the mind; but, Mother, what can one do to realise it?

To live for the Divine means to offer all that one does to the Divine without desiring a personal result from what one does. Certainly at the beginning, when the Divine is only a word or at most an idea and not *an experience*, the whole thing remains purely mental. But if one makes a sincere and repeated effort, one day the experience comes and one feels that the offering made is made to something real, tangible, concrete and beneficent. The more sincere and assiduous one is, the sooner the experience comes and the longer it remains.

For each person the way differs in its details, but sincerity and perseverance are equally indispensable for all.

6 May 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

Would it be possible to have an electric fan? X promised me one three years ago, but now he advises me to ask You.

You may have one if there is one or if you can find one. But do you think it will help you to find the Divine?

7 May 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

Regarding the fan, I don't think it will help me to find the Divine, but is it an obstacle? If You think it is better for me not to have it, all right, I accept Your decision without complaint.

What is an obstacle to the spiritual life is to attach importance to material comfort and to take one's desires for needs — in other words, self-deception. Now, *if you have a fan* and wish to use

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it, you may do so, knowing that it will not help you in any way to make progress — that it will only give your body the illusion of being more comfortable.

These things ought to have no importance in life.

13 May 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

One is often afraid of doing what is new; the body refuses to act in a new way, such as trying a new gymnastic figure or another kind of dive. Where does this fear come from? How can one get rid of it? And again, how can one encourage others to do so?

The body is afraid of anything new because its very base is inertia, *tamas*; it is the vital which brings in a dominant note of *rajas*, activity. That is why, as a general rule, the intrusion of the vital in the form of ambition, emulation and vanity, compels the body to shake off the *tamas* and make the necessary effort to progress.

Naturally, those in whom the mind is dominant can lecture their body and provide it with all the reasons needed to overcome its fear.

The best way for everyone is self-giving to the Divine and trust in His infinite Grace.

13 May 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

Self-deception has a thousand faces and a thousand ways of disguising itself in us. How can one discover it and get rid of it?

It is a long, slow task which can only be accomplished by a perfect sincerity. One must be very attentive, always on guard,

Some Answers from the Mother

watch all one's emotional movements and vital reactions, never close one's eyes with indulgence to one's own weaknesses, and catch oneself each time one makes a mistake, even a small one.

If one continues with persistence, this becomes very interesting and gets easier and easier.

20 May 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

What is the difference between pleasure, joy, happiness, ecstasy and Ananda? Can we find one in the other?

Ananda belongs to the Supreme Lord.

Ecstasy belongs to the perfected yogi.

Joy belongs to the desireless man.

Pleasure is within the reach of all living beings, but with its inevitable accompaniment of suffering.

27 May 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

Your answers last week were very succinct. Isn't a perfected yogi identified with the Supreme Lord? Isn't a desireless man a sincere sadhak?

My answers are given in order to open your mind and to make you exceed, little by little, your present mental limits.

The Supreme Lord can give his Ananda to whomever He wants and as He wants.

A sadhak is one who has chosen a yogic discipline and practises it. There are desireless men who are not pursuing any yoga.

Widen your thought — it is very necessary!

3 June 1964

*

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

(Regarding love) How can one direct this human love towards the ideal love, the true love?

There is only one true love — it is the Divine Love; all other loves are diminutions, limitations and deformations of that Love. Even the love of the bhakta for his God is a diminution and often is tainted by egoism. But as one tends quite naturally to become like what one loves, the bhakta, if he is sincere, begins to become like the Divine whom he adores, and thus his love becomes purer and purer. To adore the Divine in the one whom one loves has often been suggested as a solution, but unless one's heart and thought are *very pure*, it can lead to deplorable abasements.

It would seem that in your situation, the best solution would be to use your mutual attachment to unite your efforts in a common and combined aspiration to attain the Divine, and in perfect sincerity to let each bring to the other, as far as possible, what the other needs to attain that goal.

10 June 1964

*

*Sweet Mother,
How can one know the other's need and help him?*

I was not speaking of external things and mental faculties! True love is in the soul (all the rest is vital attraction or mental and physical attachment, nothing else) and the soul (the psychic being) knows instinctively what the other needs to receive and is always ready to give it to him.

17 June 1964

*

*Sweet Mother,
Is it because we have defects in ourselves that we cannot tolerate them in others? What is the origin of the shock we feel?*

Some Answers from the Mother

Yes, in a general way it is the defects you have in yourselves which seem to you most shocking in others.

Later on, you come to understand that others are a mirror reflecting the image of what you are.

24 June 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

Just as there are tangible and concrete bodily exercises and disciplines for physical culture, is there not something tangible and concrete for the progress of the soul and the consciousness?

Since the most ancient times, each system of yoga has developed its own discipline in all its details. All that can be studied, learned and practised. But according to Sri Aurobindo's teaching, each of these practices has its limitations and gives only a partial result. That is why he advised those who want to follow the integral yoga to find their *own* discipline, based on the ancient knowledge but adapted to the needs and the condition of each individual.

1 July 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

I thought that illness came from some impurity or weakness in the being, but what does this epidemic in the Ashram mean? Even X was a victim. Where does this epidemic come from?

An epidemic is a *collective* illness and comes from a *collective* impurity. The Ashram as a whole is evidently very far from what it should be to be equal to its task and give to the world the example of a total consecration to the Divine Work and the

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

preparation of the future. The forms of illness vary according to the condition of each person and his link with the whole.

8 July 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

I am trying to concentrate in the heart and to enter deep within as You advised me to do, but in vain. The only result is that I get a headache, a kind of dizziness, but as soon as I open my eyes everything becomes normal again. What should I do?

This means that you are not yet ready for a spiritual discipline and that you must wait until life has moulded you a little more and your psychic consciousness awakens from the slumber in which it lies.

15 July 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

Until I am ready for a spiritual discipline, what should I do, apart from aspiring that the Mother may pull me out of the slumber and awaken my psychic consciousness?

To develop your intelligence, read the teachings of Sri Aurobindo regularly and very attentively. To develop and master your vital, carefully observe your movements and reactions with a will to overcome desires, and aspire to find your psychic being and unite with it. Physically, continue with what you are doing, develop and control your body methodically, make yourself useful by working at the Playground and your place of work, and try to do it as selflessly as possible.

If you are sincere and scrupulously honest, my help is certainly with you and one day you will become aware of it.

22 July 1964

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

When a stranger asks us what the Sri Aurobindo Ashram is, how can we give him a reply that is both short and correct?

The Ashram is the cradle of a new world, of the creation of tomorrow.

And if other questions are put to you, the only reply to be made is: you must read the books and study the teaching.

29 July 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

Are there really any tragedies in life, since everything leads to the Divine?

They are tragedies for those who take them tragically—the immense majority of human beings.

One must live in the consciousness of the Divine Unity to see the Grace behind everything.

5 August 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

People often say that our food does not contain enough vitamins and protein. The doctors claim that this is why we have so much physical and bodily suffering.¹⁴ Is it really the cause? Does food have such an important place in life?

For those whose consciousness is centred *in the body*, who live for the body, its desires and satisfactions, those for whom the *truth* begins and ends *with the body*, it is evident that food is of capital importance since they *live to eat*.

¹⁴ Beside this sentence, the Mother wrote: “So much as that???”

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The doctors are always anxious to throw the responsibility for their incompetence to cure on the external conditions of life.

If one wants to see the truth of the problem, it is this: only an enlightened body, balanced and free from all vital desire and mental preconception, is capable of knowing what it needs in regard to quantity and kind of food — and it is so exceptional to find such a body that we need not speak of it.

Apart from that, one must act for the best and not attach too much importance to it.

Let those who have confidence in doctors do as they advise and see if it helps them to suffer less!

12 August 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

There are times when I feel like abandoning all my activities — the Playground, band, studies, etc. — and devoting all my time to work. But my logic does not accept this. Where does this idea come from and why?

In this case your logic is right. In the outer nature there is often a tamasic tendency to simplify the conditions of life in order to avoid the effort of organising more complicated circumstances. But when one wants to progress in the integrality of the being, this simplification is hardly advisable.

19 August 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

What is the most effective way of overcoming desires and attachments: to cut them off all at one stroke, even at the risk of breaking down, or to advance slowly and surely by eliminating them carefully one by one?

Some Answers from the Mother

Both these ways are equally ineffective. The normal result of both these methods is that you deceive yourself, you delude yourself that you have overcome your desires, whereas at best you are merely sitting on them — they remain repressed in the subconscious until they explode there and cause an upheaval in the whole being.

It is from *within* that you must become master of your lower nature by establishing your consciousness firmly in a domain that is free of all desire and attachment because it is under the influence of the divine Light and Force. It is a long and exacting labour which must be undertaken with an unfailing sincerity and a tireless perseverance.

In any case, you should never pretend to be more perfect than you are, and still less should you be satisfied with false appearances.

26 August 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

When one is very sensitive, one easily suffers. Since this sensitivity is the sign of a strong ego, how can one eliminate the ego?

Why do you say that sensitivity is the sign of a strong ego? It does not seem to be evident at all. Moreover, there are many different kinds of sensitivity: some stem from weakness, others — the best — are the result of refinement. The ego generally governs the development of the individual, but the most developed individualities are not necessarily those in whom the ego is strongest — on the contrary. As the individuality perfects itself, the power of the ego diminishes, and indeed it is by perfecting himself that the individual arrives at that state of divinisation which liberates him from the ego.

2 September 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

How can one know whether we are progressing or not, individually and collectively?

It is always preferable not to try to assess the progress one is making because it does not help one to make it—on the contrary. Aspiration for progress, if it is SINCERE, is sure to have an effect. But whatever the progress made, individually or collectively, the progress still remaining to be made is so considerable that there is no reason to stop on the way to assess the ground one has covered.

The perception that some progress has been made should come spontaneously, by the sudden and unexpected awareness of what one is in comparison with what one was some time before. That is all—but that in itself requires a fairly high degree of development of the consciousness.

9 September 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

I put my question badly last time. I did not mean the progress one has made, that is to say, the results of the past, but the state one is in. I do not want to assess the ground I have covered, but to know whether I am advancing on the path continually, without stoppage.

The advance is rarely in a straight and continuous line because a human being is made up of many different parts, and generally one part or another progresses in its turn while the other parts remain quiescent until their turn comes. It is only when the consciousness grows enough to have an overall view that one can see exactly what is happening. But in order to be sure of advancing progressively and regularly, one must always keep alive the flame of one's aspiration.

16 September 1964

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

What is the use of Japa?¹⁵ Is it a good method to repeat words like “Silence” and “Peace” in order to establish silence and peace in oneself when one sits down to meditate?

A mere repetition of words cannot have much effect.

There are classical or traditional Japas which are intended to subdue the lower mind and establish a connection with higher forces or with deities. These Japas must be given by the Guru, who at the same time infuses them with the power of realisation. They are useful only for those who want to do an intensive yoga and spend five or six hours a day in yogic practices.

Japa such as you describe it cannot have much effect except to create a tamasic dullness, which should not be mistaken for mental silence.

23 September 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

I heard that an astrologer has predicted that in six months' time Lal Bahadur Shastri will no longer be Prime Minister and that he will be replaced by Indira Gandhi, but only for a fortnight. Then a period of chaos in the Government will follow. After that, a young man will appear on the scene who will be guided by a divine force coming from a woman of great spiritual power. What do You think about it?

People say many things — especially astrologers!

We have only to wait; we shall surely see what happens.

30 September 1964

*

¹⁵ Japa: continuous repetition of a mantra.

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

Sweet Mother,

*Is a mistake or a bad action pardonable if one is sure
that what one is doing is right and that one is sincere?
How can one know that one is mistaken?*

The very fact of being mistaken proves that one is not sincere in some part of the being. For the psychic being *knows* and is not mistaken; but more often than not, we do not listen to what it says because it speaks without violence or insistence — it is a murmur in the depths of our heart which is easy to ignore.

However, there are cases where one acts wrongly *out of ignorance*, and this error is effaced as soon as the ignorance is replaced by knowledge and the way of acting completely changed. What man in his ignorance calls “pardon” is the effacement, the dissolution of errors committed.

7 October 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

*There are moments when, in spite of myself, a little
black cloud of jealousy comes and upsets my activities
during my working hours. I dispel it immediately by
reasoning, but all the same its effect remains and makes
me a little sullen and very touchy.
How can one get rid of this?*

By widening one’s consciousness and making it universal.

There is another way, but it is still more difficult. It is by realising the supreme Unity.

14 October 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

*People often ask us this question: “What are you doing
for society or even for the people of Pondicherry? You
are preoccupied with your own community, your own*

Some Answers from the Mother

progress. Nothing exists for you outside the Ashram. Isn't this a kind of isolation, a form of egoism?"

To this rather silly kind of question, Sri Aurobindo always used to reply:

“The greatest egoist is the Supreme Lord because He never bothers about anything but Himself!”

27 October 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

There are moments during meditation when I feel that something in me wants to soar aloft and enjoy full freedom. There is a kind of enthusiasm in the soul (I do not know whether it comes from the soul) to enjoy the supreme Ananda and forget life as it really is. What does all this mean?

It is the natural and indispensable counterpart of the moments — so numerous and so frequent! — when you are attached to the physical life and you understand and appreciate only that. The two extremes always alternate in experience until one has found the poise of the total and synthetic truth.

That alone can give the true Freedom which is experienced in all circumstances.

28 October 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

Although one part of the being aspires and wants the Divine, the other part is so tamasic and heavy! How can it be awakened? What blows does it need? It is not that this part is against the Divine — it does not even seem to be interested in Him (which is perhaps worse).

That is indeed an indication of complete inertia. Sri Aurobindo has written: “If you cannot love God, at least find a way to fight

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with Him so that He may be your enemy”¹⁶ (implying that you are sure to be conquered by Him). It is a humorous remark, but it means that of all conditions, inertia is the worst.

Aspiration is the only remedy — an aspiration that rises constantly like a clear flame burning up all the impurities of the being.

4 November 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

We see many people leaving the Ashram, either to seek a career or to study; and they are mostly those who have been here since childhood. There is a kind of uncertainty in our young people when they see others leave here and they say cautiously: “Who knows whether it won’t be my turn some day!” I feel there is a force behind all this. What is it?

This uncertainty and these departures are due to the lower nature, which resists the influence of the yogic power and tries to slow down the divine action, not out of ill-will but in order to be sure that nothing is forgotten or neglected in the haste to reach the goal. Few are ready for a total consecration. Many children who have studied here need to come to grips with life before they can be ready for the divine work, and that is why they leave to undergo the test of ordinary life.

11 November 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

I have a habit of blaming myself, of making myself responsible for all misunderstandings; this is a weakness

¹⁶ “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.”

Thoughts and Aphorisms, in SABCL, Vol. 17, p. 130.

Some Answers from the Mother

rather than a virtue, for I feel that I take them upon myself in order to end the matter as quickly as possible — it is a kind of escapism.

Mother, I also feel that I have a very strong inferiority complex.

Where does all this come from and how can I get rid of it?

All this comes from your ego which is very much occupied with itself and far prefers to blame and criticise itself than to think of something else... (the Divine for example) and forget itself.

18 November 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

What is the meaning of one's birthday, apart from its commemorative character? How can one take advantage of this occasion?

Because of the rhythm of the universal forces, a person is supposed to have a special receptivity on his birthday each year.

He can therefore take advantage of this receptivity by making good resolutions and fresh progress on the path of his integral development.

25 November 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

Often when I read Sri Aurobindo's works or listen to his words, I am wonder-struck: how can this eternal truth, this beauty of expression escape people! It is really strange that he is not yet recognised, at least as a supreme creator, a pure artist, a poet par excellence! So I tell myself that my judgments, my appreciations are influenced by my devotion for the Master — and not everyone is

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devoted. I do not think this is true. But then, why are men's hearts not yet enchanted by His Words?

Who can understand Sri Aurobindo? He is as vast as the universe and his teaching is limitless...

The only way to come a little close to him is to love him sincerely and give oneself unreservedly to his work. In that way, each one does his best and contributes as much as he can to the transformation of the world which Sri Aurobindo has predicted.

2 December 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

How can one empty the mind of all thought? When one tries during meditation, the thought that one must not think of anything is always there.

It is not *during* meditation that one must learn to be silent, because the very fact of trying makes a noise.

One must learn to concentrate one's energies in the heart — then, when one succeeds in that, silence comes automatically.

9 December 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

Sri Aurobindo has said somewhere that if we surrender to the Divine Grace, it will do everything for us. Then what is the value of tapasya?

If you want to know what Sri Aurobindo has said on a given subject, you must at least read all he has written on that subject. You will then see that he seems to have said the most contradictory things. But when one has read everything and understood

Some Answers from the Mother

a little, one sees that all the contradictions complement one another and are organised and unified in an integral synthesis.

Here is another quotation by Sri Aurobindo which will show you that your question is an ignorant one. There are many others which you could read to advantage and which will make your intelligence more supple:

“If there is not a complete surrender, then it is not possible to adopt the baby cat attitude, — it becomes mere tamasic passivity calling itself surrender. If a complete surrender is not possible in the beginning, it follows that personal effort is necessary.”¹⁷

16 December 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

Often after a long meditation (an effort to meditate), I feel very tired and want to rest. Why is this and how can I feel differently?

So long as you are making an effort, it is not meditation and there is not much use in prolonging this state.

To obtain mental silence, one must learn to relax, to let oneself float on the waves of the universal force as a plank floats on water, *motionless* but *relaxed*.

Effort is never silent.

23 December 1964

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Sweet Mother,

How can one make use of every moment of this unique privilege of living here in the Ashram?

Never forget where you are.

¹⁷ *Letters on Yoga*, SABCL, Vol. 23, pp. 593–94.

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

Never forget where you are living and the true aim of life. Remember this at every moment and in all circumstances. In this way you will make the best use of your existence.

Happy New Year for 1965.

30 December 1964

*

Sweet Mother,

What is the eternal truth behind this sympathy or attraction of man for woman and of woman for man?

The relationship between Purusha and Prakriti.

You have only to read what Sri Aurobindo has written on this subject.

5 January 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

You have said in Your New Year message for this year: "Salute to the advent of Truth." Is it therefore very near? What must we do during 1965 to prepare ourselves to recognise it and receive it?

The best thing to do is to distinguish in oneself the origin of all one's movements — those that come from the light of truth and those that come from the old inertia and falsehood — in order to accept the first and to refuse or reject the others.

With practice one learns to distinguish more and more clearly, but one can establish as a general rule that all that tends towards disharmony, disorder and inertia comes from the falsehood and all that favours union, harmony, order and consciousness comes from the Truth.

This is only a hint, nothing more, about how to take the first steps on the path.

13 January 1965

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

Does Your message for this year announce an Age of Truth — what is called the Satya Yuga in the ancient Scriptures (the Mahabharata)?

An age of truth is sure to come before the earth is transformed.

21 January 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

What does this extraordinary Asuric attack on the Ashram mean?¹⁸ Are we responsible for it because of our faults and because we disobey the Supreme Truth in our daily lives?

Very certainly such a thing has been made possible because the atmosphere of the Ashram is not pure enough to be invulnerable to falsehood.

17 February 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

Somebody asked me this question: “Is it not a great loss for human society if persons endowed with an exceptional capacity to serve mankind, such as a gifted doctor or barrister, come to stay here in the Ashram for their own salvation? They could perhaps serve the Divine better by serving men and the world!”

Nobody comes here for his *own salvation* because Sri Aurobindo does not believe in *salvation*; for us *salvation* is a meaningless word. We are here to prepare the transformation of the earth and men so that the new creation may take place, and if we

¹⁸ On the evening of February 11, many Ashram buildings were stoned, burned or looted, ostensibly as part of an anti-Hindi agitation.

make individual efforts to progress, it is because this progress is indispensable for the accomplishment of the work.

I am surprised that after having lived in the Ashram for so long, you can still think in this way and be open to this Sunday-school drivel.

I am sending you a quotation from Sri Aurobindo which will perhaps help to enlighten your thought.

“It is equally ignorant and one thousand miles away from my teaching to find it in your relations with human beings or in the nobility of the human character or an idea that we are here to establish mental and moral and social Truth and justice on human and egoistic lines. I have never promised to do anything of the kind. Human nature is made up of imperfections, even its righteousness and virtue are pretensions, imperfections and prancings of self-approbatory egoism.... What is aimed at by us is a spiritual truth as the basis of life, the first words of which are surrender and union with the Divine and the transcendence of ego. So long as that basis is not established, a sadhak is only an ignorant and imperfect human being struggling with the evils of the lower nature.... What is created by spiritual progress is an inner closeness and intimacy in the inner being, the sense of the Mother’s love and presence etc.”

24 February 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

What is the best way of expressing one’s gratitude towards man and towards the Divine?

Why do you put man and the Divine together?

It is true that man is essentially divine, but at present, apart from a few very rare exceptions, man is quite unconscious of the Divine he carries within him; and it is just this unconsciousness which constitutes the falsehood of the material world.

Some Answers from the Mother

I have already written to you that our gratitude should go to the Divine and that as for men what is required is an attitude of goodwill, understanding and mutual help.

To feel deeply, intensely and constantly a total gratitude towards the Divine is the best way to be happy and peaceful.

And the only true way of expressing one's gratitude to the Divine is to identify with Him.

3 March 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

When can one say with certitude that one has started Sri Aurobindo's yoga? What is the sure sign of it?

It is impossible to say, because for each person it is different. It depends on the part of one's being that awakens first and responds to Sri Aurobindo's influence.

And no one can tell about another person.

10 March 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

I aspire to live the yoga of Sri Aurobindo, the life divine. But I feel that I am in a virgin forest in which I have lost my sense of direction. Where exactly am I?

I would like to have an indication, a way to get out, onto the right path, the path leading to the Divine.

Generally, the starting-point must be an experience, however small, which serves as a compass on the way, an experience one refers to in order to be sure of not going astray, until one is ready for another more important and conclusive experience.

The real landmarks on the way are the spontaneous experiences, not those that come from a mental formation and are always unreliable.

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

The experience must come *first* and the explanation afterwards. That is why Sri Aurobindo has said: Never distrust your experience; but you may distrust your explanation, which is a mental activity.¹⁹

It is very important to take note of one's experiences and remember them. To construct a system of development is secondary and sometimes harmful.

17 March 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

How can one distinguish a dream from an experience?

In a general way, a dream leaves a confused and fleeting impression, whereas an experience awakens a deep and lasting feeling.

But the shades of difference are subtle and many, and it is by a very attentive and *sincere* observation (that is to say, free from bias and preference) that one gradually learns to discern the one from the other.

24 March 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

Just as there is a methodical progression of exercises for mental and physical education, isn't there a similar method to progress towards Sri Aurobindo's yoga? It should vary with each individual. Could you make a step-by-step programme for me to follow daily?

The mechanical regularity of a fixed programme is indispensable for physical, mental and vital development; but this mechanical

¹⁹ "Experience in thy soul the truth of the Scripture; afterwards, if thou wilt, reason and state thy experience intellectually and even then distrust thy statement; but distrust never thy experience."

Thoughts and Aphorisms, in SABCL, Vol. 17, p. 89

Some Answers from the Mother

rigidity has little or no effect on spiritual development where the spontaneity of an absolute sincerity is indispensable.

Sri Aurobindo has written very clearly on this subject. And what he has written on it has appeared in *The Synthesis of Yoga*.

However, as an initial help to set you on the path, I can tell you: (1) that on getting up, before starting the day, it is good to make an offering of this day to the Divine, an offering of all that one thinks, all that one is, all that one will do; (2) and at night, before going to sleep, it is good to review the day, taking note of all the times one has forgotten or neglected to make an offering of one's self or one's action, and to aspire or pray that these lapses do not recur.

This is a minimum, a very small beginning — and it should increase with the sincerity of your consecration.

31 March 1965

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Sweet Mother,

How can one increase single-mindedness and will-power? They are so necessary for doing anything.

Through regular, persevering, obstinate, unflagging exercise — I mean exercise of concentration and will.

*

Mother, I have started reading French books — X has given me a list.

It is good for you to read a lot of French; it will teach you how to write.

7 April 1965

*

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

Sweet Mother,

You have written: “Of all renunciations, the most difficult is to renounce one’s good habits.” What exactly do you mean by this? Does it suggest that good habits are not necessary in the yoga?

Good habits are indispensable so long as one acts out of habit. But to attain the supreme goal of yoga, one must abandon all ties, whatever they may be. And good habits are also a tie which must one day be abandoned when one wants to obey and *is able* to obey nothing but the one supreme impulse, the Will of the Supreme.

14 April 1965

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Sweet Mother,

You have written: “So long as you have to renounce anything, you are not on this path.”²⁰ But doesn’t all renunciation begin when one is on the path?

What I call “being on the path” is being in a state of consciousness in which only union with the Divine has any value — this union is the only thing worth living, the sole object of aspiration. Everything else has lost all value and is not worth seeking, so there is no longer any question of renouncing it because it is no longer an object of desire.

As long as union with the Divine is not *the* thing for which one lives, one is not yet on the path.

21 April 1965

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Sweet Mother,

Why is India, which has such a rich past and the promise of such a brilliant future, in such a miserable

²⁰ *Questions and Answers 1929–1931*, CWM, Vol. 3, p. 128.

Some Answers from the Mother

condition at present? When will she emerge from this pitiful condition and reaffirm her greatness?

When she renounces falsehood and lives in the Truth.

28 April 1965

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Sweet Mother,

*Why did Sri Aurobindo advise India's leaders to accept the Cripps Proposal in 1942, when He knew fully well that they would not?*²¹

The Divine often advises or tries to guide man, knowing very well that His help will be refused. Why then does He do it?

The Divine *always* informs, but it is rare indeed for men to listen to Him. Either they do not hear Him or do not believe Him.

Men always complain of not being helped, but the truth is that they refuse the help which is *always* with them.

5 May 1965

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Sweet Mother,

You say that to hope to partake of the new realisation, "you must feel that this world is ugly, stupid, brutal and full of intolerable suffering".²² But what would be the state of one who feels that everything here is the play

²¹ Sri Aurobindo sent a special messenger to Delhi advising Indian leaders to accept, as a first step towards independence, Sir Stafford Cripps' proposal of Dominion status for India. Sri Aurobindo held that this proposal conferred essential independence on India by putting her on a par with the various Dominions already associated with the United Kingdom. Had his advice been heeded, the partition of India might have been avoided.

²² *Questions and Answers 1929–1931*, CWM, Vol. 3, p. 128.

of a benevolent God? Would he not also participate in this new realisation?

It is in the depths of the consciousness, beyond the mind, that one can in all sincerity have the experience that all is the Divine and that only the Divine exists. But the manifestation is progressive, and in order to have the strength to advance by rejecting what ought to disappear, one must strongly feel one's unworthiness and incapacity to express the divine perfection.

The two states of consciousness should be simultaneous and complementary, not successive and contradictory, and this too is possible only when the seat of consciousness is beyond the mind and its limitations.

12 May 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

When department heads or superiors make mistakes or commit an injustice towards their subordinates, what should be the attitude of those affected by these errors? Should one keep silent and say, "It is none of my business", or should one try to point out the mistake to them?

Neither the one nor the other.

First and always, we must ask ourselves what our instrument of judgment is. One must ask, "What is my judgment based on? Do I have perfect knowledge? What in me is judging? Do I have the divine consciousness? Am I completely disinterested in this matter? Am I free of all desire and all ego?"

And since the answer to all these questions will be the same, namely, "NO", the honest and sincere conclusion must be: "I cannot judge, I do not have the elements needed for a true judgment; therefore I will not judge, I will keep quiet."

19 May 1965

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Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

Being far from the Truth-Consciousness, must one always remain silent, even though as an individual one is obliged to make decisions and give opinions?

What constitutes an individuality?

An individuality is a conscious being organised around a divine centre. All the divine centres are essentially One in their origin, but they act as separate beings in the manifestation.

The individual must make decisions in order to live, but it is not indispensable that he should have opinions, and still less that he should air them.

It is ignorance that has opinions.

Knowledge *knows*.

26 May 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

The descent of the Supermind, which You announced on the 29th of February 1956, is still only “something one hears about” for most people here.

When shall we feel and see this supreme and radical change of the whole nature which You have predicted?

The descent of the forerunners of the supramental forces is a *fact* (not a prediction). The incapacity of the vast majority of human beings to become conscious of it is a *fact* which can in no way affect the fact of the advent of these forces and powers in the physical world.

The “supreme and radical” change of the whole nature can only come about after a long and slow preparation, and men will perceive it only when their consciousness has become enlightened.

2 June 1965

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Series Ten – To a Young Captain

Sweet Mother,

The resolutions I make lose their intensity and ardour after a time. How can I keep this enthusiasm and increase it more and more?

BY WANTING TO.

9 June 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

You have written: "The force which, when absorbed in the Ignorance, assumes the form of vital desires is the same which, in its pure form, constitutes the dynamis towards transformation."²³

Is this dynamis that of aspiration? If so, could one say that aspiration is a purified desire?

One can say whatever one likes, provided one knows what one is talking about.

The words are of little importance; it is the experience and the sincerity of the experience that count.

23 June 1965

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Sweet Mother,

You speak (in Conversations) of the plunge we must take in order to have the true spiritual experience. Is it possible to achieve it by aspiration alone, or is there a method or discipline to be followed?

Everything is possible. All paths lead to the goal provided they are followed with persistence and sincerity.

²³ *Questions and Answers 1929–1931*, CWM, Vol. 3, p. 133.

Some Answers from the Mother

It is best for each person to find his own path, but for this the aspiration must be ardent, the will unshakable, the patience unflinching.

30 June 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

Are illnesses and accidents the result of something bad one has thought or done, of a fall in one's consciousness? If the cause is a mistake one has made, how can one find out what it is?

It has nothing to do with *punishment*; it is the natural and normal consequence of an error, shortcoming or fault which necessarily has consequences. Actually, everything in the world is a question of equilibrium or disequilibrium, of harmony or disorder. Vibrations of harmony attract and encourage harmonious events; vibrations of disequilibrium create, as it were, a disequilibrium in circumstances (illnesses, accidents, etc.). This may be collective or individual, but the principle is the same — and so is the remedy: to cultivate in oneself order and harmony, peace and equilibrium by surrendering unreservedly to the Divine Will.

7 July 1965

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Sweet Mother,

*Sri Aurobindo says: "If the transformation of the body is complete, that means no subjection to death.... One creates a new body for oneself when one wants to change...."*²⁴

Mother, what does he mean by "One creates a new body for oneself when one wants to change"? Does this change take place in the present body or does one have

²⁴ *Letters on Yoga*, SABCL, Vol. 22, p. 11.

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

to leave it? If one has to leave the body, there seems to be death. So...?

What he means is that when one will have the power to withdraw the physical body from the influence of death, the power of transformation will be such that one will also be able to change the form of that body at will.

14 July 1965

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Sweet Mother,

What do You mean by “to change the form of that body at will”? For example, will a hundred-year old man be able to renew his body and become a young man of twenty-five?

Those who have a supramentalised body will not be subject to the law of aging; consequently the question of age will not arise for them.

21 July 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

Once, in one of Your Wednesday classes, You said that in order not to feel pain one must, so to speak, cut the nerve that conveys this sensation to the brain. How can this be done?

I did not say “cut the nerve” — that would be a surgical operation! I said, cut the conscious connection with the brain.

It is an occult operation, certainly more difficult than the other for those who don’t know how to do it, but less dangerous.

28 July 1965

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Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

Does every person who comes to earth have a definite goal he must achieve in this life, and does he achieve it unconsciously in spite of himself?

YES.

11 August 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

People who come to the Ashram for the first time are often delighted with their visit and full of praise for the efficient administration of this organisation. But when they get to know the Ashram and the sadhaks better, their admiration begins to wane and they find that Ashram people are far more egoistic than people from outside, more arrogant, lacking any sympathy, incapable of cooperation, etc. What do You say to all this, Mother?

Sometimes it is like that, as a matter of fact, and sometimes it is the opposite: at first a total incomprehension, but later, little by little, one comes to understand and appreciate.

Both are equally true and equally incomplete.

In the world as it is now, everything is mixed and each one sees and feels that which corresponds to his own nature.

To tell the truth, *it doesn't matter at all.*

25 August 1965

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Sweet Mother,

I really feel that there is a great lack of harmony and cooperation here among us and among the various departments. This results in a great waste of money and energy. Where does this disharmony come from and when will it be set right?

Or is this feeling I have only a reflection of my own nature!

Here is the best answer to your questions, written by Sri Aurobindo:

Each one carries in himself the seeds of this disharmony, and his most urgent work is to purify himself of it by a constant aspiration.

1 September 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

Sri Aurobindo writes in His Essays on the Gita: “The law of Vishnu cannot prevail till the debt to Rudra is paid.” What does this mean?

Mother, is the present situation in India²⁵ like the debt that must be paid to Rudra?

Here is the whole quotation which I had prepared in advance for those who want to know the reason for the present situation. I am sending it to you so that your question becomes unnecessary.

“No real peace can be till the heart of man deserves peace; the law of Vishnu cannot prevail till the debt to Rudra is paid. To turn aside then and preach to a still unevolved mankind the law of love and oneness? Teachers of the law of love and oneness there must be, for by that way must come the ultimate salvation. But not till the Time-Spirit in man is ready, can the inner and ultimate prevail over the outer and immediate reality. Christ and Buddha have come and gone but it is Rudra who still holds the world in the hollow of his hand. And meanwhile the fierce forward labour of mankind tormented and oppressed by the powers that are profiteers of egoistic force and their servants

²⁵ On September 1, Pakistan invaded India's border at Jammu-Kashmir.

Some Answers from the Mother

cries for the sword of the Hero of the struggle and the word of its prophet.”²⁶

8 September 1965

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Sweet Mother,

*In spite of Your message of September 16 to the Prime Minister and the Army Chief of Staff, was not our Government's acceptance of the cease-fire the best that could be done under the circumstances?*²⁷

They could not do otherwise.

29 September 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

I often feel, and very concretely too, that You are constantly protecting me from all the misfortunes of life. But I very often ask myself: "Why does Mother protect me and keep me in such happiness, I who so little deserve it?"

Because it is not a question of merit but of Grace.

6 October 1965

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Sweet Mother,

One sees that the world as a whole is presently in a sort of disequilibrium and chaos. Does this mean that it is preparing for the manifestation of a new force, for the descent of the Truth, or is it the result of the action

²⁶ Sri Aurobindo, *Essays on the Gita*, SABCL, Vol. 13, p. 372.

²⁷ The Indo-Pakistan conflict ended in a cease-fire on September 22. The Mother's message, sent six days prior to the cease-fire, was: "It is for the sake and the triumph of Truth that India is fighting and must fight until India and Pakistan have become *One* because that is the truth of their being."

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

of hostile forces in revolt against this descent? And what place does India occupy in all this?

It is both at the same time — a chaotic means of preparation. India ought to be the spiritual guide who explains what is happening and helps to hasten the movement. But unfortunately, in her blind ambition to imitate the West, she has become materialistic and neglectful of her soul.

13 October 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

We know that we should not do certain things and we do not really want to do them, but still we do them. Why does this happen? How can we avoid it?

That's how it is when one is lacking in will and in force of consciousness.

Both of these can be acquired if one is sincere in one's aspiration.

20 October 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

About individual transformation and social transformation You say: "Since the environment reacts upon the individual and, on the other hand, the value of the environment depends upon the value of the individual, the two works should proceed side by side. But this can be done only through division of labour, and that necessitates the formation of a group, hierarchicised, if possible."²⁸

²⁸ *Words of Long Ago*, CWM, Vol. 2, p. 50.

Some Answers from the Mother

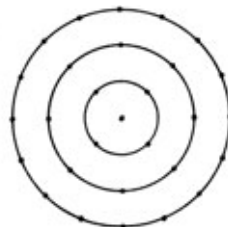
Mother, I do not understand what You mean by the formation of a hierarchicised group.

A hierarchicised group means a group in which the activities and functions are organised according to individual ability, with a leader at the centre. A military organisation, for example, is a hierarchy.

Here is a diagram of the ancient traditional hierarchies.

1 — 4 — 8 — 16

and so on.



27 October 1965

Sweet Mother,

*Is there a hierarchicised group here in the Ashram?
Mother, I want to know more about it, but I don't know
how to formulate it.*

Every group, if it is a real one — that is, one made up according to the ability of the individuals who compose it — must necessarily be hierarchical.

But there are considerable obstacles to the realisation of this hierarchy:

(1) First, when the group is incomplete — that is, when it does not have all the members necessary to constitute the hierarchy and certain functions or intermediaries are missing.

(2) The indiscipline of certain members refusing wholly or in part to occupy the place assigned to them.

When order and harmony are established, the hierarchy is organised quite naturally and spontaneously.

3 November 1965

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Series Ten – To a Young Captain

Sweet Mother,

Why does one feel afraid? Where does fear come from?

Fear is an invention of the hostile forces who have created it as the best means of dominating living beings, animals and men.

Those who are *pure* — that is to say, exclusively under the Divine influence — have no fear.

10 November 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

You write in Your Conversations: “Each time that something of the Divine Truth and the Divine Force comes down to manifest upon earth, some change is effected in the earth’s atmosphere.”²⁹

(1) Is this change always violent and destructive, such as a revolution or a war?

Not necessarily. What expresses itself as a war or a revolution is the resistance in the human consciousness to the New Force. When the resistance is less, everything takes place harmoniously.

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(2) And is the converse always valid: if there is a war or a revolution, is it the sign of a descent of the Truth?

Not necessarily. Human folly takes advantage of the slightest cause to manifest itself.

17 November 1965

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²⁹ *Questions and Answers 1929–1931*, CWM, Vol. 3, p. 79.

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

You write: "Each one here represents an impossibility to be solved."³⁰ Could You explain to me what this means exactly?

It is an ironic way of saying that the most difficult cases, from the standpoint of transformation, are gathered here to concretise and synthesise the work of transforming the earth in order to prepare the new creation.

1 December 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

You told me to enter within, into the depths of my heart, to find You seated there. But, Mother, I cannot manage to enter into the heart. I feel during meditation that my consciousness is flying around an impenetrable fortress. What should I do to succeed in what You have told me?

This happens because you are trying to enter with a superficial consciousness which does not have contact with the inner states of being. You have to go out of this external consciousness and penetrate into a subtler consciousness; then the fortress will no longer be impenetrable.

22 December 1965

*

Sweet Mother,

What must we do to serve the Truth? Must it first of all be lived?

To serve It, you must live it.

To live it, you must necessarily serve it.

³⁰ *Words of the Mother-II*, CWM, Vol. 14, p. 84.

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

And for both, you must want it with sincerity and persistence.

5 January 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

There is a tendency among most of us here to conduct our lives and programmes according to the customs of society. We say: "We must also think of the opinion of people from outside. Since we live in society, we must be reasonable and lead a life in keeping with theirs." Sweet Mother, what do You say to all this and what should our attitude be towards the customs and laws of society?

If most people here think and feel like that, it is an obvious proof that most are not at all ready for the new life, nor even ready to *prepare* for the new life. And to tell the truth, they would do far better to return to the ordinary life and experience it, instead of taking advantage of the exceptional conditions of existence they have here, without being worthy of enjoying them.

12 January 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

Formerly, You were very strict about permitting people to come and live in the Ashram. Now it is no longer so. Why?

So long as the Ashram was reserved for those who wanted to practise the yoga, it was natural to be strict.

As soon as the children were admitted here, it was no longer possible to be strict and the nature of the life changed.

Now the Ashram has become a symbolic representation of life on earth and everything can find a place in it, provided it has the will to progress towards a diviner life.

19 January 1966

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Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

I ask myself whether I am practising yoga! But the answer is not sure. Can You tell me where I am and how I can progress on this path?

By the very fact that you are living on earth, you are doing a yoga, even if you do not know it; and by the very fact that you are living here, you are helped in your yoga to the utmost of your possibilities. The only thing you lack is being conscious.

2 February 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

You say that “by the very fact that you are living on earth, you are doing a yoga” and You also told me that “the Ashram was reserved for those who wanted to practise the yoga”; and again, I believe you have said somewhere, “Not everyone here is meant for yoga.” So... ?

Poor boy! Now you are perplexed...

Well, all three are true, but on different planes, and to understand something of the problem one has to reach the domain where the three complement one another and unite.

9 February 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

When You say:

(1) *“By the very fact that you are living on earth, you are doing a yoga” — do You mean that it is the yoga of the natural and inevitable progress of evolution?*

(2) *“The Ashram was reserved for those who wanted to practise the yoga” — that is to say, only for those who are practising consciously?*

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

(3) “Not everyone here is meant for yoga” — that is, they are incapable of doing it consciously?

YES.

16 February 1966

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*Sweet Mother,
How can one increase one’s receptivity?*

Receptivity is proportionate to self-giving.

2 March 1966

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*Sweet Mother,
There was a time when I used to see You often in my dreams and sometimes I even saw Sri Aurobindo too. But I haven’t enjoyed this happiness for a long time. Why? What does it mean?*

The best way of seeing us in your dreams is to concentrate on us before going to sleep. Do you do this now as you used to before? This is also the way to avoid going to undesirable places during your sleep, for in those places you are sure not to meet us. Try, and you will see the result.

23 March 1966

*

*Sweet Mother,
We are supposed to be attempting something that no one has ever tried before. But, Mother, isn’t it true that we now tend to direct our lives and activities more and more towards the principles and ways of ordinary life? In that case, aren’t we straying from the true path?*

You are still in the old rut that separates spirituality from life. Whereas Sri Aurobindo has declared, “All life is Yoga” and

Some Answers from the Mother

affirmed that it is *in* life that one must do Yoga. You seem to have forgotten this.

30 March 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

Isn't this immense freedom we are given dangerous for those of us who are not yet awake, who are still unconscious? What is the explanation for this opportunity, this good fortune we have been granted?

Danger and risk are part of every forward movement. Without them nothing would ever stir; and also they are indispensable for moulding the character of those who want to progress.

13 April 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

How should I prepare myself for the April 24th Darshan?

Look attentively into yourself to find out what for you is the most important thing, the thing you feel that you couldn't do without.

It is an interesting discovery.

19 April 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

Why does anger exist?

I suppose you are asking where anger comes from.

Anger is a violent reaction of the vital to some shock that is unpleasant to it; and when it involves words or thoughts,

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

the mind responds to the influence of the vital and also reacts violently. Any expression of anger is the sign of a lack of self-control.

11 May 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

Two days ago I was with You in my dream and You spoke with me for quite a long time. I don't remember the whole conversation, but the impression that remains is that You are not very pleased with the questions I ask You every Wednesday. Is this true?

That you saw and heard me is a sign of progress, and with this I am pleased. But it is true that I find you mentally a bit lazy and indifferent to the opportunity I give you each week to ask me a question. Your questions are rather commonplace and don't give the impression that you are really searching for the secrets of life and the world.

18 May 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

Are mental indifference and lack of curiosity a sort of mental inertia?

Usually they are due to mental inertia, unless one has obtained this calm and indifference through a very intense sadhana resulting in a perfect equality for which good and bad, pleasant and unpleasant no longer exist. But in that case, mental activity is replaced by an intuitive activity of a much higher kind.

25 May 1966

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

How can one get out of this mental laziness and inertia?

By wanting to do so, with persistence and obstinacy. By doing every day a mental exercise of reading, organisation and development.

This should alternate in the course of the day with exercises of mental silence in concentration.

1 June 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

Are the presence and intervention of the Americans in Vietnam justifiable?

From what point of view are you asking this question?

If it is from the political point of view, politics is steeped in falsehood, and I am not interested in it.

If it is from the moral point of view, morality is a shield which ordinary men flourish to protect themselves from the Truth.

If it is from the spiritual point of view, the Divine Will alone is justifiable, and it is That which men travesty and deform in all their actions.

6 July 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

I had asked my last question from the spiritual point of view and from Your answer I conclude that the American action is not at all justifiable. But, Mother, isn't the world in danger of being swallowed by the Communists and isn't that why the Americans and their Allies are

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engaged in safeguarding the freedom of man? Is that the Divine Will?

The opinion you express is the opinion of the Americans and of a large number of human beings who think like them. But the Communists and all those who have faith in the Communist ideal have the opposite opinion, not to mention all the many and varied opinions on social and political subjects. All these are only OPINIONS and have no value at all from the Divine point of view—the Divine who does not have an opinion but a total vision of everything as a whole and of the goal to be achieved, which is the only thing that matters.

Everything *mental* is necessarily an opinion and expresses only an infinitesimal fraction of the Truth.

13 July 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

Some say that You have stated: “Among the 1500 people who are here, there are only 250 or so who understand Sri Aurobindo’s yoga, only forty-five who practise it, five who are capable of realisation and only one who can be transformed.” What is the truth?

I may have said something of the kind. But the exactness of the numbers is certainly fanciful.

It is true that the number of those who take the yoga seriously is not considerable...

But the Divine Grace is infinite!

20 July 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

I feel it is most shameful on our part to waste the Divine Grace, to misuse this unique privilege granted to

Some Answers from the Mother

us here. But, Mother, why do we do this? For, each one of us has surely felt and enjoyed — at least once in his life, in a blessed moment — the infinite Splendour which is within our reach and awaits us. Yet there are so few of us who take the yoga seriously. Why?

It is quite simply *unconsciousness*, incoercible TAMAS.

27 July 1966

*

(Regarding an invitation to the captain to follow a course of practical studies in Calcutta)

Those who *sincerely want* to learn have all the possibilities to do so here. The only thing that one has outside, but does not have here, is the moral constraint of an external discipline.

Here one is free and the only constraint is the one that one puts *on oneself* when one is SINCERE.

Now it is for you to decide.

3 August 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

I was very happy to receive Your reply and I have decided not to go. In any case I doubted that You would approve of this proposal, but all the same I had the following reasons when I asked You if I could accept the invitation. (Here the reasons are enumerated.)

From your letter I can see that you really have a great desire to accept the invitation... I do not want, then, to deprive you of this experience and I say to you: "You may go."

This decision is final.

4 August 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

May I have photographs of Sri Aurobindo and You, with Your blessings, to keep with me when I am far from Pondicherry?

Do you really want to go?

22 August 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

One final note on this famous affair of the invitation which has created a lot of misunderstandings everywhere.

Mother, I do not understand You! On one occasion You say to me: “You may go. This decision is final”; later when I come to You, You affirm it once again and send me away with the assurance that You will be with me always, that I can go without fear, that it will do me good, etc., in spite of my insistence that I no longer feel like going after having received Your first letter.

Naturally, after that, I go and make all the necessary arrangements. X arranges for my departure. But later on, You reply to X that You have given me permission because You learned from me that he approves of my going there. Strange!

Truly, I understand nothing about all this except that You are not enthusiastic about my going. But why all this complication? I don’t know what X thinks of me, but it is true that I have got him into a very complicated situation and I regret it.

Mother, after Your last question, I no longer feel like going. I WILL NOT GO. This is my final decision. This famous chapter is closed.

Some Answers from the Mother

Very good. And everything I did was precisely to bring you to this decision!

23 August 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

India is supposed to be the Guru of the world in order to establish the spiritual life on earth. But, Mother, in order to occupy this high position she must be worthy politically, morally and physically, mustn't she?

Without any doubt — and just now, there is much to be done!

7 September 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

Why this chaotic condition in our present government? Is it the sign of a change for the better, for the reign of Truth?

It is the pressure of the force of Truth on the whole earth which is causing disorder, confusion and falsehood to spring up everywhere in a refusal to be transformed.

The victory of the Truth is certain, but it is difficult to say when and how it will come about.

14 September 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

How can one practise yogic disciplines without believing in God or the Divine?³¹

Why? It is very easy. Because these are only words. When one practises without believing in God or the Divine, one practises

³¹ The Mother replied to this question orally; she was speaking to someone other than the captain.

in order to attain some perfection, to make progress, for all sorts of reasons.

Are there many people — I am not speaking of those who have a religion: they learn a catechism when they are young and that doesn't mean much; but out of people taken as they are — are there many who believe in the Divine? Not in Europe anyway. But even here, there are quite a number who by tradition have a “family deity”, yet it doesn't bother them at all to take their deity and throw it into the Ganges when they get displeased! It does happen — I know some people who did it. They had a family Kali in their house, they actually did take her and throw her into the Ganges because they were displeased with her. If one believes in the Divine, one cannot do things like that.

I don't know — believe in the Divine? One thirsts for a certain perfection, perhaps even to transcend oneself, to arrive at something higher than what one is; if one is a philanthropist, one has an aspiration that mankind should become better, or less unhappy, less miserable; all sorts of things like that. One can practise yoga for that, but that is not believing. To believe is to have the faith that there cannot be a world without the Divine, that the very existence of the world proves the existence of the Divine. And not just a “belief”, not something one has thought out or been taught, nothing like that: faith. A faith that is a living knowledge, not an acquired one, that the existence of the world is enough to prove the Divine. Without the Divine, no world. And this is so obvious, you see, that one has the impression that in order to think otherwise, one has to be a bit dense. And the “Divine” not in the sense of “purpose” or “goal” or “end”, not that sort of thing: the world as it is proves the Divine. Because it is the Divine under a certain aspect — a rather distorted one, but still...

For me it is even stronger than that. I look at a rose, a thing that contains such a concentration of spontaneous beauty — not man-made: spontaneous, a blossoming; one has only to

Some Answers from the Mother

see it to be sure that there is a Divine. It is a certainty. One cannot... it is impossible not to believe. It is like those people (this is fantastic!), those people who study Nature, really study it thoroughly, how everything functions and is brought about and exists — how can one study sincerely, with attention and care, without being absolutely convinced that the Divine is there? We call it the Divine — the Divine is tiny! (*Mother laughs.*) For me existence is an incontestable proof that there is... that there is nothing but That — something we cannot name, cannot define, cannot describe, but something we can feel and can more and more become. A Something that is more perfect than all the perfections, more beautiful than all the beauties, more marvelous than all the marvels, so that even the totality of all that exists cannot express it. And there is nothing but That. And it is not a Something floating in nothingness: there is nothing but That.

8 October 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

How can we know that our acts, our thoughts and our aspirations are not tainted by vital desire, though they may seem right to our common sense?

It is a question of *inner sincerity*. Common sense is not a judge because it is a mental function of a rather inferior order.

Moreover, there is a very simple way of knowing. One has only to imagine that the thing one wants to do will not be done, and if this imagination creates the least uneasiness, then one can be sure of the presence of desire.

12 October 1966

*

Series Ten – To a Young Captain

Sweet Mother,

In this integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo, work has a place of capital importance, doesn't it? This being the case, what place does meditation have?

Work does not go on twenty-four hours a day.

There is room for many other activities which have their purpose in an *integral* Yoga.

26 October 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

In the story You wrote, "The Virtues", You describe several virtues. Which is the most necessary?

SINCERITY.

2 November 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

For several years now, we have been hearing that the Ashram is in a terrible financial condition, and from time to time we clearly see this for ourselves. But, Mother, we also see extravagant spending by certain individuals and certain departments. Moreover, these expenditures are possible only through Your generosity. So how can it be said that the Ashram is undergoing a financial crisis?

But perhaps it is just *because* certain individuals and certain departments are spending extravagantly that there is a financial crisis!...

Otherwise all is well.

30 November 1966

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

Your reply explains nothing, for isn't it You who orders these expenditures?

Not always.

At least You give Your consent.

Sometimes.

*

When one sits for meditation, one can sometimes succeed in establishing mental silence. But how can one fix this as a constant experience? Because the moment one throws oneself into activity, the mental disturbance begins again!

One can have a quiet mind without being in a complete state of silence; one can carry on an activity without being disturbed. The ideal is to be able to act without coming out of the mental quietude.

One can do everything while keeping the mind quiet, and what one does is better done.

*

In order to achieve self-mastery, should one follow the method of "widening the consciousness"?

Widening the consciousness is necessary for all who want to live a free and intelligent life, even without there being any question of Yoga or aspiration for the Divine Life.

7 December 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

When I heard that X was drowned in a lake at Gingee during the outing, I was unable to believe it or to be shocked by this news. The only question that arose in me was: How is it possible! Mother knew we were at Gingee, so Her protection was with us. Then how is it possible?

The protection is over the group — and if the action of the group is coordinated and disciplined, the protection acts. But when an individual acts independently, the protection acts only in the measure of his faith.

14 December 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

In the Darshan message of November 24th, Sri Aurobindo speaks of the influence of the Divine Compassion and the Divine Grace.³² But what is the difference between the two?

The compassion seeks to relieve the suffering of all, whether they deserve it or not.

The Grace does not recognise the right of suffering to exist and abolishes it.

21 December 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

What are the qualities needed for one to be called “a true child of the Ashram”?

³² “There are these three powers: (1) The Cosmic Law, of Karma or what else; (2) the Divine Compassion acting on as many as it can reach through the nets of the Law and giving them their chance; (3) the Divine Grace which acts more incalculably but also more irresistibly than the others.” — *Letters on Yoga*, SABCL, Vol. 23, p. 609.

Some Answers from the Mother

Sincerity, courage, discipline, endurance, absolute faith in the Divine work and unshakable trust in the Divine Grace. All this must be accompanied by a sustained, ardent, persevering aspiration and a boundless patience.

Happy New Year

28 December 1966

*

Sweet Mother,

It is said that nothing is in us, everything comes from outside. It is also said elsewhere that our vision of the outside (of the world around us) is the reflection of our inner being. Could you explain these two sentences a little?

In order to understand these apparent contradictions, one has to rise to the intellectual level on which all opposite ideas can be set face to face and assembled in a comprehensive synthesis.

*

You once wrote to me that "others are a mirror reflecting the image of what you are." Can you explain this to me a little?

The things that shock you most in others are those that you are struggling against in yourself or trying to suppress in yourself. Knowing this teaches you to be patient.

1 February 1967

*

Sweet Mother,

On the cards that You send to people on their birthdays, often You simply write: "Bonne fête to X, with my blessings." But sometimes You write various other things, such as: "May he be born to the true life" or

“For a year of great progress”, etc. On what do all these variations depend?

On the condition of the one to whom I write the card and on his state of consciousness, which varies according to the moment and the year.

8 February 1967

*

Sweet Mother,

The ordinary man is often guided in life by his conscience, isn't he? So what becomes of one who has no conscience, who has lost it by having disregarded it too often?

What is usually called “conscience” is a mental formation based on the idea of good and evil, a moral entity or rather an element of goodwill which tries to keep the individual on what is commonly known as the straight path.

This element acts as a defence against the hostile forces which can quite easily take possession of one who has disregarded the advice of his conscience.

But all this is a mental approximation of the Truth. It is not the Truth itself.

15 February 1967

*

Sweet Mother,

Why is it that whenever one thinks of You one feels a need for physical closeness? What is the value of this physical contact?

(1) When one is more conscious in the physical than in the vital and mental, the physical relation seems more real and tangible.

(2) For those who have seriously begun the yoga in the body, the physical relation is of course a powerful aid.

Some Answers from the Mother

I ask the first to make an effort to establish not only a psychic relation (which is always there even when they are not conscious of it) but also a mental and vital relation, which makes the outer relation less indispensable.

I try to teach the others to widen their physical consciousness so as to be able to benefit from my physical presence even at a distance.

22 March 1967

*

Sweet Mother,

When one goes away from here, one feels a sort of emptiness inside. Even if one has all the physical comforts, there is still something missing. One doesn't feel very joyful. One wants to come back as soon as possible. Can You explain to me the reason for this feeling? Why doesn't one even feel free?

Perhaps it is because you have a soul.

12 April 1967

*

Sweet Mother,

What do You mean by Your last answer? Doesn't everyone have a soul?

Not everyone is conscious of his soul and very few are those who are guided by their soul.

19 April 1967

*

Sweet Mother,

Normally, I feel quite happy with life as it is — time passes quickly. But there are periods when I feel that I

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am not making much progress. I am still in the rut of old petty habits which do not allow me to be free.

The character can change and must change, but it is a long and minute work which requires sustained effort and a great sincerity.

26 April 1967

*

Sweet Mother,

People are saying many things about the 4th of May³³ — sometimes You too are quoted. But in spite of all this, I have not quite understood its significance.

Is it necessary that it should have a significance?

Sri Aurobindo announced that from that date onwards something would happen.³⁴ And it did happen.

That is all that is needed.

21 June 1967

*

Sweet Mother,

It is said that the vibrations of the being develop from one life to another, become richer and form the psychic personality behind the surface personality. But then how does the psychic, weighed down by these vibrations and memories, remain free?³⁵

But why does he say “weighed down”?

³³ The numerical sequence of this date is 4.5.67.

³⁴ Sri Aurobindo wrote: “1.2.34. It is supposed to be always a year of manifestation. 2.3.45 is the year of power — when the thing manifested gets full force. 4.5.67 is the year of complete realisation.” (Letter of 2 February 1934)

³⁵ The Mother replied to this question orally; she was speaking to someone other than the captain.

Some Answers from the Mother

No, the psychic *decants* — that is exactly what happens. The psychic does not retain things in their totality — it decants, it gradually decants the vibrations.

The psychic memory is a decanted memory of events. For example, in past lives there have been moments when, for some reason or other, the psychic was present and participated; in that case it retains the memory of the circumstance. But the memory it retains is that of the *psychic* life of that moment; so even if it retains the memory of the image, it is a simplified image such as it is translated in the psychic consciousness and according to the psychic vibration of all the people present.

He would not ask such a question if he had ever had a psychic memory, because when one has one, it is quite evident.

Before knowing these things, I had had psychic memories and always they struck me by their special character. It was as if one had, one cannot exactly say an emotion, but a certain emotional vibration of a circumstance; and that is what is solid, what remains, what lasts. And so with that, one has a perception — a little vague, a little blurred — of the people who were there, of the circumstances, of the events, and that makes a psychic memory; it is rarely the events that mentally are considered as the most memorable or most important in a lifetime, but the moments when the psychic has participated — consciously participated — in the event. And that is what remains.

15 July 1967

*

Sweet Mother,

You are with us always and at every moment, only we are not conscious of it. Only danger makes us recall Your Presence so that we may have Your protection. But the other day while we were on a long journey, we felt the presence of someone other than ourselves in the car, and it was very strong, even though we were not conscious

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of any danger. Was there a possibility of danger on that day? If so, why didn't we sense it?

I was very strongly and consciously with you because X had written to me that the tyres of the car were in poor condition.

You did not feel the danger because *I did not want you to feel it.*

19 July 1967

*

Sweet Mother,

Why is it that in the Ashram itself people feel the need to form little groups and societies: for example, World Union, New Age Association, etc.? What is their purpose?

It is because men still imagine that to do something useful, they have to form groups.

It is the caricature of organisation.

20 September 1967

*

Sweet Mother,

Does the Divine punish injustice? Is it possible that He ever punishes anyone?

16 October 1967

16 October 1967 – 25 July 1970

After all these years I have found the forgotten notebook, and I reply:

The Divine does not see things as men do and has no need to punish or reward.

All actions carry in themselves their fruits with their consequences.

Some Answers from the Mother

According to its nature, an action brings one nearer to the Divine or takes one farther from Him — and that is the supreme consequence.

25 July 1970

*

Sweet Mother,

The other day I had a discussion with X about Sri Aurobindo's Action. He said that had there been an enlightened person like Vivekananda, the work could have been done better, but that Mother has to do Her work with the instruments She has at her disposal. Finally he told me that he had no opinion on the subject. "My business," he said, "is to write." And he asked me what my "business" was. I replied that I didn't know what my "business" was — all I knew was that I had to concentrate on myself in order to perfect myself more and more. Was that correct? Mother, what actually is my "business"?

Certainly, the most important occupation is to develop and perfect oneself, but that can be done very well, and even better, while working. It is for you to know what work it is that most interests you, the one that opens for you a path towards perfection. It may be something apparently very modest; it is not the apparent importance of a work which gives it its real value for the yoga.

5 August 1970

*

Sweet Mother,

I have read and heard much about past and future lives, but I feel very strongly that it is in this very life that we must realise our highest aspirations, as if this were the last chance given to us. For me, allusions to other lives are intangible and academic rather than a help and

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a hope. It is not that I don't believe in reincarnation, but this idea comes back to my mind very often. Mother, is this a narrowness of vision on my part, or what?

Knowledge of past lives is interesting for an understanding of one's nature and a mastery of one's imperfections. But to tell the truth, it is not of capital importance, and it is far more important to concentrate on the future, on the consciousness to be acquired and on the development of the nature, which is almost unlimited for those who know how to do it.

We are at an especially favourable moment in the universal existence, a moment when, upon earth, everything is being prepared for a new creation, or rather, for a new manifestation in the eternal creation.

7 November 1970

*

Sweet Mother,

When You are physically stricken, I always feel very sad. I tell myself that it is not an ordinary illness, that it is an experience leading towards physical transformation. But when I think of Your suffering body, I am sad. And then, is this not part of the Sacrifice of the Supreme spoken of by Sri Aurobindo? Are we worthy of this Sacrifice?

Sweet Mother, at times like this, how should we be? What is the best attitude on our part?

The best for each one is to progress as sincerely as he can. The material difficulties are part of the work of transformation and they should be accepted calmly.

14 November 1970

*

Some Answers from the Mother

Sweet Mother,

I have the impression that Your Force responds according to the intensity of our prayer. But my case seems to be different. Or am I not conscious of my prayers? Or is everything done for me, for my good, in spite of myself?

It is always that way for everyone. The difference lies in each one's state of consciousness. Some are entirely conscious of what is done for them. Those who make an effort become conscious of the answer they receive, and there are those whose aspiration is sufficiently strong and sincere for them to be constantly conscious of the help they are given.

28 November 1970