

15 September 1954

This talk is based upon Sri Aurobindo's *Bases of Yoga*, Chapter 1, "Calm–Peace–Equality".

When one detaches oneself from the thought-mind, does the mind continue to think?

Usually it continues to think, but this does not affect you any longer. It is not exactly "thinking", it is like a market-place, you see. Things come, circulate, turn around, go out, come back, cross, sometimes collide. It is absolutely like a market-place. These things go on like that (*gestures*).

The factory of thoughts is... this does not occur very often. Some people have a particular kind of occupation which lies in giving a particular form to the thought-force that comes from outside. These are usually the people who write, speak, teach, and others... It is quite rare; usually things come and go, come back, return, and if one detaches oneself, one can even look at it all from above as though one were looking at a market-place from the top of a tower. Then all this becomes very amusing. One can even see where thoughts come from, where they go, what they stir up, what the results are.

Mother, what does "vital mind" mean?

Well, you see, naturally these words are used for classification in order to make oneself understood; but truly, each part of the being is itself divided into four. There is a physical mind, a physical vital and a physical physical, and there is even a physical psychic which is behind. Well, there is a vital mind, a vital vital, a vital physical and also a vital psychic which is behind, hidden. And there is a mental mind, a mental vital, and

15 September 1954

a mental physical and a mental psychic which is hidden behind. And each one corresponds to a particular kind of activity, and also to a particular region, a zone of consciousness and being. And these zones or inner dimensions correspond to outer zones and dimensions, universal, or terrestrial if you like, to simplify the problem. There is a mental mind within you, there is a mental mind in the terrestrial atmosphere; and — how shall I put it? — the density of these inner and outer regions is the same, the vibratory mode is identical.

If you enter consciously into your mental mind, you can enter consciously the mental mind of the earth. We have explained this once, haven't we? We made some sort of drawings, didn't we? No, I am not speaking of the globe, I am speaking of... those in which we marked the regions, you know.

Sweet Mother, how can one obtain a mental control of these impulses by a struggle?

All educated people do it. Only the barbarian doesn't do it. This is the very substance of education, you know, for it is understood that if one lives in society — indeed even if one lives quite alone, but still much more so if one lives in society — one cannot do all that his impulses drive him to do. It is altogether impossible, you know. From the time you are quite young, the work of your educators is to teach you to control your impulses and obey only those which are in conformity with the laws under which you live or with the ideal you wish to follow or the customs of the environment in which you are. The value of this mental construction which will govern your impulses depends a great deal on the surroundings in which you live and the character of the parents or people who educate you. But whether it be good or bad, mediocre or excellent, it is always the result of a mental control over the impulses. When your parents tell you, "You should not do this", or when they say, "You have to do that", this is a beginning of education for the mind's control over the impulses.

Questions and Answers

So the man of real merit or the more civilised man has a whole mental construction to which he must conform in order to be in harmony with the ideal of the environment in which he lives. But someone who does not conform at least to the smallest part of this construction would be considered a savage and would be thrown out of the society immediately. In fact, people who are criminals or half-mad are those who obey their impulses without any mental control. There isn't a single person among you who gives way without control to all the impulses that get hold of him. You have only to observe yourselves living, you spend your time saying, "No, this I can't do", or "This I can", or in restraining one movement or encouraging another. This is mental control.

I think it is only the savage who doesn't have it, one who lives in a jungle, you know, who is not in contact with anybody. And yet, even he should control himself, for something will go terribly wrong with him if he doesn't control himself. In his case too the mind must act to prevent him from doing things which will cause him serious trouble. This is the nature of the human being: to have a kind of mental activity in him which governs the rest of his being, more or less. And his level of civilisation depends exactly on the point this control has reached, and naturally, as I said, on the value of the controlling mental construction.

Sweet Mother, is the physical mind the same as the mechanical mind?

Almost. You see, there is just a little difference, but not much. The mechanical mind is still more stupid than the physical mind. The physical mind is what we spoke about one day, that which is never sure of anything.

I told you the story of the closed door, you remember. Well, that is the nature of the physical mind. The mechanical mind is at a lower level still, because it doesn't even listen to the possibility of a convincing reason, and this happens to everyone.

15 September 1954

Usually we don't let it function, but it comes along repeating the same things, absolutely mechanically, without rhyme or reason, just like that. When some craze or other takes hold of it, it goes... For example, you see, if it fancies counting: "One, two, three, four", then it will go on: "One, two, three, four; one, two, three, four." And you may think of all kinds of things, but it goes on: "One, two, three, four", like that... (*Mother laughs.*) Or it catches hold of three words, four words and repeats them and goes on repeating them; and unless one turns away with a certain violence and punches it soundly, telling it, "Keep quiet!", it continues in this way, indefinitely.

Mother, do thoughts and ideas belong exclusively to the mental world?

There are ideas and thoughts which come from beyond and above, and then these are only given a form by the mind. In fact, this is what I was just going to say. The true writer, the true thinker, the true orator does not construct thoughts in his head, he receives an inspiration from above, and while entering his mind it is formulated into words. But the source of thought is very much higher.

But what you wanted to say was, "Are there thoughts which come from below?" These are not thoughts. They are just impulses which are translated into words in the consciousness, formulated in words, but these are not thoughts. They have a different nature.

What does "subconscious" mean, exactly?

Subconscious? It is what is half conscious, you see. And we say "sub", because that means "below" the consciousness. It is something more obscure than the consciousness, but which, at the same time, is like a lower substratum supporting the consciousness. It is like those stores from which one would

Questions and Answers

draw out something quite unformed, a formless substance which could be translated into forms or translated into actions or translated into impulses or even into feelings. But it is like those stores containing a considerable number of fairly mixed things, not very distinct, but which would be very rich in possibilities; only they would have to be drawn out into the light and organised, classified, put into shape so as to give them a value.

So long as they are there, it is a mass, a mixture, certainly subconscious, that is to say, half-conscious, semi-conscious, in which everything is muddled up. It lacks organisation and classification. It is the characteristic of consciousness to organise and classify... classification, putting into order, arranging logically... there are varieties of logic, but still, some logic, a beginning of logic. There are higher and higher kinds of logic, more and more superior. But even preliminary logic is the first work of the consciousness.

But consciousness is plunged — plunged as though by its roots — into this domain, and draws up as it would draw up sap; it constantly pumps this subconscious which it has to transform into something organised. That is why we spend our time re-doing the same work. If we had a small limited amount of consciousness which was our own, as some people imagine it, like a small bag full of consciousness, you know, which is one's own consciousness, well, when you have put it in good order and organised it well, your work will be done, and you can be quiet. But it is not at all like that, it is not at all like that.

Even as there are elements of consciousness which escape and evaporate, which spread out, there is this constant rising, as from a deep ground, of something that asks to be made conscious. And your work has to be perpetually re-done. But one can — if one is careful and attentive — instead of re-doing exactly the same thing each time, one can re-do it with a little progress. Then the movement is not rectilinear, but a movement which goes like this... you see (*gesture of spiral movement*). One

15 September 1954

seems at times to be going back, but that's in order to go farther and farther forward.

Can one have silence without having peace?

Perhaps, yes; that is to say, one may have silence in the mind and not have peace in the heart. It can very well happen that the mind is quite silent and immobile but that, all the same, here, in the heart something vibrates and throbs. This usually proves that one is pretty divided. But many people are divided. One can indeed have mental silence and not have peace in the heart. It can very well happen that the mind is quite silent and immobile, but that, despite this, there are still tremblings in the nerves which continue vibrating and jumping there, and yet the mind is quite silent. But if the silence is kept long enough, the rest must necessarily follow.

Are quietude and calm the same thing?

Quietude and calm? Yes, almost.

Of course there are very different kinds of calm and very different kinds of peace, and to each a different word could be given, another name, if one wanted to be quite precise and exact. But then, it is a work which means constructing a vocabulary for oneself and, obviously, when one has to speak always to the same people and the number is limited, one can build up a vocabulary precise enough for there not to be any need to explain the words used.

But if you are communicating with new people or those outside, you would have to begin your work all over again, for it is something, in short, quite... not only relative but quite arbitrary. My words are given a certain meaning, each one gives them a certain meaning, and people don't understand one another well unless they have the habit of speaking to each other and are in agreement, at least tacitly, about the meaning of the words

Questions and Answers

they use. You speak to a new person who comes from quite a different environment — say, someone who comes from another country than yours — and has, for instance, a very, very different trend of thinking. Well, you say something to him, he does not understand what you tell him. He understands something else which is in his head, because he doesn't give the same meaning as you to the words you use. It is when people have the habit of speaking to one another, when they have taken care to make their vocabulary precise, that they can speak to one another with the least lack of understanding or, if you like, the maximum understanding.

What is the way to accept the Grace with gratitude?

Ah! First of all you must feel the need for it.

This is the most important point. It is to have a certain inner humility which makes you aware of your helplessness without the Grace, that truly, without it you are incomplete and powerless. This, to begin with, is the first thing.

It is an experience one can very well have. When, you see, even people who know nothing find themselves in quite difficult circumstances or facing a problem which must be solved or, as I just told you, an impulse which must be overcome or something that has disturbed them... and then they realise they are lost, they don't know what to do — neither their mind nor their will nor their feelings help — they don't know what to do, then it happens; there is within them something like a kind of call, a call to something which can do what one cannot. One aspires to something which is capable of doing what one can't do.

This is the first condition. And then, if you become aware that it is only the Grace which can do that, that the situation in which you find yourself, from there the Grace alone can pull you out, can give you the solution and the strength to come out of it, then, quite naturally an intense aspiration awakes in you, a consciousness which is translated into an opening. If you call,

15 September 1954

aspire, and if you hope to get an answer, you will quite naturally open yourself to the Grace.

And later — you must pay great attention to this (*Mother puts her finger on her lips*) — the Grace will answer you, the Grace will pull you out of the trouble, the Grace will give you the solution to your problem or will help you to get out of your difficulty. But once you are free from trouble and have come out of your difficulty, don't forget that it is the Grace which pulled you out, and don't think it is yourself. For this, indeed, is the important point. Most people, as soon as the difficulty has gone, say, "After all, I pulled myself out of the difficulty quite well."

There you are. And then you lock and bolt the door, you see, and you cannot receive anything any more. You need once again some acute anguish, some terrible difficulty for this kind of inner stupidity to give way, and for you to realise once more that you can do nothing. Because it is only when you grow aware that you are powerless that you begin to be just a little open and plastic. But so long as you think that what you do depends on your own skill and your own capacity, truly, not only do you close one door, but, you know, you close lots of doors one upon another, and bolt them. You shut yourself up in a fortress and nothing can enter there. That is the great drawback: one forgets very quickly. Quite naturally one is satisfied with one's own capacity.

*But Mother, even when one tries to think that one is powerless, there is something which believes one is powerful.
So?*

Ah, yes, ah, yes! Ah, it is very difficult to be sincere.... That is why the blows multiply and sometimes become terrible, because that's the only thing which breaks your stupidity. This is the justification of calamities. Only when you are in an acutely painful situation and indeed before something that affects you deeply, then that makes the stupidity melt away a little. But as

Questions and Answers

you say, even when there is something that melts, there is still a little something which remains inside. And that is why it lasts so long...

How many blows are needed in life for one to know to the very depths that one is *nothing*, that one can do *nothing*, that one *does not exist*, that one is *nothing*, that there is no entity without the divine Consciousness and the Grace. From the moment one knows it, it is over; all the difficulties have gone. When one knows it integrally and there is nothing which resists... but till that moment... And it takes very long.

Why doesn't the blow come all at once?

Because that would kill you. For if the blow is strong enough to cure you, it would simply crush you, it would reduce you to pulp. It is only by proceeding little by little, little by little, very gradually, that you can continue to exist. Naturally this depends on the inner strength, the inner sincerity, and on the capacity for progress, for profiting by experience and, as I said a while ago, on *not forgetting*. If one is lucky enough not to forget, then one goes much faster. One can go very fast. And if at the same time one has that inner moral strength which, when the red-hot iron is at hand, does not extinguish it by trying to pour water over it, but instead goes to the very core of the abscess, then in this case things go very fast also. But not many people are strong enough for this. On the contrary, they very quickly do this (*gesture*), like this, like this, in order to hide, to hide from themselves. How many pretty little explanations one gives oneself, how many excuses one piles up for all the foolishnesses one has committed.

Does the number of blows depend on people, Sweet Mother?

Yes, it depends on people; it depends, as I said, on their capacity

15 September 1954

for progress, and on their strength and their resistance. But I know very few people who don't need blows at all.

Mother, is the blow which comes Mahakali's?

The blow? Not necessarily.

If you swallow a poison and are poisoned, it won't be Mahakali's fault. It is you who will have swallowed the poison. If one puts oneself into absolutely ridiculous conditions, one is in a state in which one is bound to break one's head or arm or back; because you are not in a state of true equilibrium, you can't accuse the divine forces. It is the normal mechanical consequence of the stupidity committed, of the inner state.

What is the nature of Mahakali's blow?

It makes you feel very happy. It gives you a sweet warmth in the heart, like that. You feel quite satisfied.

Does one have to aspire for it or does it come naturally?

Yes, one must have a sincerity in the aspiration, really want to progress. One must truly say, "Yes, I want to progress" with sincerity... "Whatever happens, I want to progress." Then it comes.

But as I said, it comes with a power of plenitude which holds an intense joy. When one has taken a decision, has decided to stop something in oneself, just not to repeat a stupidity one has committed, or to do something which one finds impossible or difficult to do and which, one knows, should be done, and when one has taken the decision and has put in the full sincerity of one's will, well, then if a terrible blow comes to compel you to do what you have decided to do, it is a blow, but you feel glorified, you are quite happy, it is magnificent, you see, you feel something magnificent here (*Mother points to the heart*).

Questions and Answers

There is such a big difference between the mishaps that come to you just because you are in a purely external, mechanical, physical consciousness and in a state of ignorance which makes you commit all possible follies which naturally bring their consequences, inevitably — there is such a great difference between this and the altogether higher state to which you rise when you have determined to master yourself, to live only in the consciousness of Truth, whatever the cost, no matter what the price of progress, to progress... and the things that happen to you then are so full of meaning, you see so clearly in them that shining truth, that light which illumines you on the path as though you had a beacon, here, to guide you... you see so clearly! It is no longer something that crushes you, like a block of stone falling on your back. It is an overpowering resplendence.

That is why one always says: it is only the first step that needs an effort. The first step means: come out from that level and climb to this one. After that everything, everything changes.

But one must come out completely from that level, one must not remain there, one must not try to keep one foot here and one foot there, for that will not do.

There you are, my children.