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Mother, usually we see that many of us take an interest in the games and activities in which there is some excitement, but few take interest in serious activities, serious exercises. Why is that?

Because in the vast majority of cases, what gives interest is vital satisfaction. For you to be interested in training exercises which don't have the stimulus of games, the reason must govern the being. In ordinary men reason is the summit of human consciousness, and this is the part of the being which must govern the rest, for it is orderly and reasonable, that is, it does things with a feeling for order, for goodness, usefulness, and in accordance with a plan, a specific plan, recognised and used by each one, whereas the vital part of the being likes excitement, the unexpected, adventure — all that makes games attractive — above all, competition, the effort to win, victory over the opponent, all these things; it is the vital impulse, and the vital in man being the seat of enthusiasm, ardour, normal energy, when the attraction of the unexpected, of struggle and victory is not there, it goes to sleep, unless it is in the habit of obeying, regularly and spontaneously, the will of the reason. And this is even one of the first things for which all physical training is useful: the fact that it cannot be done really well unless the body is in the habit of obeying the reason rather than the vital impulse. For instance, the whole development of bodily perfection, of physical culture with dumb-bells and the exercises which have nothing particularly exciting and demand a discipline, habits which must be regular, reasonable, which give no scope to passion, desire, impulse — one must order one's life according to a very strict and very regular discipline — well, in order to do them really well one must be in the habit of governing one's life by the reason.

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This is not very common. Usually, unless one has taken good care to make it otherwise, the impulses — the impulses of desire — all the enthusiasms and passions with all their reactions are the masters of human life. One must already be something of a sage to be able to undergo a rigorous discipline of the body and obtain from it the ordered, regular effort which can perfect it. There is no longer any room there for all the fancies of desire. You see, as soon as one gives way to excesses, to immoderation of any kind and a disorderly life, it becomes quite impossible to control one's body and develop it normally, not to mention that, naturally, one spoils one's health and as a result the most important part of the ideal of a perfect body disappears; for with bad health, impaired health, one is not much good for anything. And it is certainly the satisfaction of desires and impulses of the vital or the unreasonable demands of certain ambitions which make the body suffer and fall ill.

Naturally, there is all the ignorance of those who don't even know the most elementary rules of life; but everybody knows one must learn how to live and, for instance, that fire burns and water can drown! People don't need to be told all that, it is something they learn fast as they grow up; but the fact that the control of reason over life is absolutely indispensable even for good health, is not always accepted by the inferior man for whom life has no savour unless he can live out his passions.

I remember a man who came here a very long time ago, to stand as a candidate for the government. It so happened that he was introduced to me because they wanted my opinion of him, and so he asked me questions about the Ashram and the life we lead here, and about what I considered to be an indispensable discipline for life. This man used to smoke the whole day and drank much more than was necessary, and so he complained, you see, that he was often tired and sometimes could not control himself. I told him, "You know, first of all, you must stop smoking and you must stop drinking." He looked at me with an unbelievable bewilderment and said, "But then, if

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one doesn't either smoke or drink, it is not worth living!" I told him, "If you are still at that stage, it is no use saying anything more."

And this is much more frequent than one thinks. To us it seems absurd, for we have something else which is of course more interesting than smoking and drinking, but for ordinary men the satisfaction of their desires is the very reason for existence. For them it seems to be an affirmation of their independence and their purpose in life. And it is simply a perversion, a deformation which is a denial of the life-instinct, it is an unhealthy interference of thought and vital impulse in physical life. It is an unhealthy impulse which does not usually exist even in animals. In this case, instinct in animals is infinitely more reasonable than human instinct — which, besides, doesn't exist any more, which has been replaced by a very perverted impulse.

Perversion is a human disease, it occurs only very rarely in animals, and then only in animals which have come close to man and therefore have been contaminated by his perversion.

There is a story about some officers in North Africa — in Algeria — who had adopted a monkey. The monkey lived with them and one day at dinner they had a grotesque idea and gave the monkey something to drink. They gave it alcohol. The monkey first saw the others drink, this seemed to it something quite interesting, and it drank a glass, a full glass of wine. Afterwards it was ill, as ill as could be, it rolled under the table with all kinds of pains and was really in a very bad way, that is, it gave the men an example of the spontaneous effect of alcohol when the physical nature is not already perverted. It nearly died of poisoning. It recovered. And some time later it was again allowed to come for dinner as it was all right, and somebody placed a glass of wine in front of it. It picked it up in a terrible rage and flung it at the head of the man who had given the glass to it.... By that it showed that it was much wiser than the men!

It is a good thing to begin to learn at an early age that to lead an efficient life and obtain from one's body the maximum it is

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able to give, reason must be the master of the house. And it is not a question of yoga or higher realisation, it is something which should be taught everywhere, in every school, every family, every home: man was made to be a mental being, and merely to be a man — we are not speaking of anything else, we are speaking only of being a man — life must be dominated by reason and not by vital impulses. This should be taught to all children from their infancy. If one is not dominated by reason, one is a brute lower than the animal; for animals don't have a mind or a reason to dominate them, but they obey the instinct of the species. There is an instinct of the species which is an extremely reasonable instinct that regulates all their activities for their own good, and automatically, without knowing it, they are subject to this instinct of the species which is altogether reasonable from the point of view of that species, of each species. And those animals which for some reason or other become free of it — as I was saying just a while ago, those which live near man and begin to obey man instead of obeying the instinct of the species — are perverted and lose the qualities of their species. But an animal left to its natural life and free from human influence is an extremely reasonable being from its own point of view, for it only does things which are in conformity with its nature and its own good. Naturally, it meets with disasters, for it is constantly at war with all the other species, but it does not itself act foolishly. Stupidities and perversion begin with conscious mind and the human species. It is the wrong use man makes of his mental capacity. Perversion begins with humanity. It is a distortion of the progress of Nature which mental consciousness represents. And, therefore, the first thing which should be taught to every human being as soon as he is able to think, is that he should obey reason which is a super-instinct of the species. Reason is the master of the nature of mankind. One must obey reason and absolutely refuse to be the slave of instincts. And here I am not talking to you about yoga, I am not talking about spiritual life, not at all; it has nothing to do with that. It is the basic wisdom

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of human life, purely human life: every human being who obeys anything other than reason is a kind of brute lower than the animal. That's all. And this should be taught everywhere; it is the basic education which should be given to children.

The reign of reason must come to an end only with the advent of the psychic law which manifests the divine Will.