

## *Appendix to Questions and Answers 1929*

*The Mother asks: “What do you want the Yoga for? To get power?”<sup>1</sup> Does “power” here mean the power to communicate one’s own experience to others? What does it precisely mean?*

Power is a general term — it is not confined to a power to communicate. The most usual form of power is control over things, persons, events, forces.

*The Mother says: “What is required is concentration — concentration upon the Divine with a view to an integral and absolute consecration to its Will and Purpose.”<sup>2</sup> Is its Will different from its Purpose?*

The two words have not the same meaning. Purpose means the intention, the object in view towards which the Divine is working. Will is a wider term than that.

*“Concentrate in the heart.”<sup>3</sup> What is concentration? What is meditation?*

Concentration means gathering of the consciousness into one centre and fixing it in one object or in one idea or in one condition. Meditation is a general term which can include many kinds of inner activity.

<sup>1</sup> *Questions and Answers 1929*, page 1. The page number in this and the following footnotes refers to the present volume.

<sup>2</sup> Page 1.      <sup>3</sup> Page 1.

## Questions and Answers

*“A fire is burning there.... It is the divinity in you — your true being. Hear its voice, follow its dictates.”<sup>4</sup>*

*I have never seen this fire in me. Yet I feel I know the divinity in me. I feel I hear its voice and I try my utmost to follow its dictates. Should I doubt my feeling?*

No, what you feel is probably the intimation from the psychic being through the mind. To be directly conscious of the psychic fire, one must have the subtle vision and subtle sense active or else the direct action of the psychic acting as a manifest power in the consciousness.

*“We have all met in previous lives.”<sup>5</sup>*

*Who precisely are “we”? Do both of you remember me? Did I often serve you for this work in the past?*

It is a general principle announced which covers all who are called to the work. At the time the Mother was seeing the past (or part of it) of those to whom she spoke and that is why she said this. At present we are too much occupied with the crucial work in the physical consciousness to go into these things. Moreover we find that it encouraged a sort of vital romanticism in the Sadhaks which made them attach more importance to these things than to the hard work of Sadhana, so we have stopped speaking of past lives and personalities.

*“There are two paths of Yoga, one of tapasyā (discipline) and the other of surrender.”<sup>6</sup>*

*Once you interpreted my vision as Agni, the fire of purification and tapasyā producing the Sun of Truth. What path do I follow? What place has tapasyā in the path of surrender? Can one do absolutely without tapasyā in the path of surrender?*

<sup>4</sup> Page 1.

<sup>5</sup> Page 3.

<sup>6</sup> Page 4.

There is a *tapasyā* that takes place automatically as the result of surrender and there is a discipline that one carries out by one's own unaided effort — it is the latter that is meant in the “two paths of Yoga”. But Agni as the fire of *tapasyā* can burn in either case.

*The Mother says that the first effect of Yoga is to take away the mental control so that the ideas and desires which were so long checked become surprisingly prominent and create difficulties.*<sup>7</sup>

They were not prominent because they were getting some satisfaction or at least the vital generally was getting indulged in one way or another. When they are no longer indulged then they become obstreperous. But they are not new forces created by the Yoga — they were there all the time.

What is meant by the mental control being removed is that the mental simply kept them in check but could not remove them. So in Yoga the mental has to be replaced by the psychic or spiritual self-control which could do what the vital cannot, only many Sadhaks do not make this exchange in time and withdraw the mental control merely.

*“The strength of such impulses as those of sex lies usually in the fact that people take too much notice of them.”*<sup>8</sup>  
*What are the other impulses referred to?*

It refers to strong vital impulses.

*“The whole world is full of the poison. You take it in with every breath.”*<sup>9</sup>  
*How long is a Sadhak subject to this fear of catching contagion? I feel I won't catch such a contagion now. Is my feeling trustworthy?*

<sup>7</sup> Page 5.    <sup>8</sup> Page 5.    <sup>9</sup> Page 6.

## Questions and Answers

I don't know that it is. One has to go very far on the path before one is so secure as that.

*The Mother says: "One who dances and jumps and screams has the feeling that he is somehow very unusual in his excitement; and his vital nature takes great pleasure in that."<sup>10</sup> Does she mean that one should be usual instead of unusual in one's excitement during spiritual experience?*

The Mother did not mean that one must be usual in one's excitement at all — she meant that the man is not only excited but also wants to be unusual (extraordinary) in his excitement. The excitement itself is bad and the desire to seem extraordinary is worse.

*"But to those who possess the necessary basis and foundation we say, on the contrary, 'aspire and draw.'"<sup>11</sup>  
Does this capacity to aspire and draw indicate a great advance already made?*

No. It is a comparatively elementary stage.

*How can one distinguish between a dream of deeper origin and a vision?<sup>12</sup>*

There is no criterion, but one can easily distinguish if one is in the inward condition, not sleep, in which most visions take place, by the nature of the impression made. A vision in dream is more difficult to distinguish from a vivid dream-experience but one gets to feel the difference.

*Sometimes one remembers the dreams, sometimes one does not.<sup>13</sup> Why is it so?*

<sup>10</sup> Page 11.    <sup>11</sup> Page 11.    <sup>12</sup> Pages 13-14.    <sup>13</sup> Page 14.

It depends on the connection between the two states of consciousness at the time of waking. Usually there is a turn over of the consciousness in which the dream-state disappears more or less abruptly, effacing the fugitive impression made by the dream events (or rather their transcription) on the physical sheath. If the waking is more composed (less abrupt) or, if the impression is very strong, then the memory remains at least of the last dream. In the last case one may remember the dream for a long time, but usually after getting up the dream memories fade away. Those who want to remember their dreams sometimes make a practice of lying quiet and tracing backwards, recovering the dreams one by one. When the dream-state is very light, one can remember more dreams than when it is heavy.

*“Spiritual experience means the contact with the Divine in oneself (or without, which comes to the same thing in that domain).”<sup>14</sup>*

*What is meant by the Divine “without”? Does it mean the cosmic Divine or the transcendental or both?*

It means the Divine seen outside in things, beings, events etc., etc.

*Was Jeanne d’Arc’s nature transformed even a little because of her relation with the two Archangels, the two beings of the Overmind?<sup>15</sup>*

I don’t see how the question of transformation comes in. Jeanne d’Arc was not practising Yoga or seeking transformation.

*“You have no longer anything that you can call your own; you feel everything as coming from the Divine, and you have to offer it back to its source. When you can realise that, then even the smallest thing to which*

<sup>14</sup> Page 17.    <sup>15</sup> Pages 17-18.

## Questions and Answers

*you do not usually pay much attention or care, ceases to be trivial and insignificant; it becomes full of meaning and it opens up a vast horizon beyond.*<sup>16</sup>

*Is this as elementary a stage as the stage of “aspire and draw” ?*

Not so elementary.

*What does Mother mean by the sentence: “When you eat, you must feel that it is the Divine who is eating through you”?*<sup>17</sup>

It means an offering of the food not to the ego or desire but to the Divine, who is behind all action.

*“But if we want the Divine to reign here we must give all we have and are and do here to the Divine.”*<sup>18</sup>

*If one does this completely has he anything more to do?*

No. But it is not easy to do it completely.

*The Mother says: “Même ceux qui ont la volonté de s’enfuir, quand ils arrivent de l’autre côté, peuvent trouver que la fuite ne sert pas à grand-chose après tout.”*<sup>19</sup>

*What does “arrivent de l’autre côté” mean in this sentence? Does it mean “when they come into this world” or “when they go into the world of silence which they realised”?*

<sup>16</sup> Page 23.    <sup>17</sup> Page 23-24.    <sup>18</sup> Page 25.

<sup>19</sup> See *Entretiens* 1929, the French translation of *Questions and Answers* 1929. The original English (page 25 of the present volume) is: “And as for those who have the will of running away, even they when they go over to the other side, may find the flight was not of much use after all.”

No — “arrivent de l’autre côté” simply means “when they die”. What Mother intended was that when they actually arrive at their Nirvana they find it is not the ultimate solution or largest realisation of the Supreme and they must eventually come back and have their share of the world action to reach that largest realisation.

*How can we recognise who gives all he has and is and does to the Divine?*

You can’t, unless you have the inner vision.

*“For there is nothing in the world which has not its ultimate truth and support in the Divine.”<sup>20</sup>*

*To know this perfectly by experience is to have a very great attainment, perhaps the final attainment; am I right?*

Yes.

*“Obviously, what has happened had to happen; it would not have been, if it had not been intended.”<sup>21</sup>*

*Then, what is the place of repentance in man’s life? Has it any place in the life of a Sadhak?*

The place of repentance is in its effect for the future — if it induces the nature to turn from the state of things that brought about the happening. For the Sadhak however it is not repentance but recognition of a wrong movement and the necessity of its not recurring that is needed.

*“You are tied to the chain of Karma, and there, in that chain, whatever happens is rigorously the consequence of what has been done before.”<sup>22</sup>*

<sup>20</sup> Page 27.    <sup>21</sup> Pages 27-28.    <sup>22</sup> Page 30.

## Questions and Answers

*Does “before” mean all the past lives, beginning from the very first up to this one?*

That is taking things in the mass. In a metaphysical sense whatever happens is the consequence of all that has gone before up to the moment of the action. Practically particular consequences have particular antecedents in the past and it is these that are said to determine it.

*The Mother has said: “En fait, la mort a été attachée à toute vie sur terre.”<sup>23</sup> The words “En fait” and “attachée” tend to give the impression that after all death is inevitable. But the preceding sentence — “Si cette croyance pouvait être rejetée, d’abord de la mentalité consciente... la mort ne serait plus inévitable”<sup>24</sup> — brings in an ambiguity because it does not make death so inevitable; it introduces a condition — an “if” — by which it could be avoided. But the categoricity of the sentence with “En fait” rather dilutes one’s expectation of a material immortality. Moreover, the “if” in the other sentence is too formidable to be satisfied.*

There is no ambiguity that I can see. “En fait” and “attachée” do not convey any sense of inevitability. “En fait” means simply that in fact, actually, as things are at present all life (on earth) has death attached to it as its end; but it does not in the least convey the idea that it can never be otherwise or that this is the unalterable law of all existence. It is at present a fact for certain reasons which are stated, — due to certain mental and physical circumstances — if these are changed, death is not inevitable any longer. Obviously the alteration can only come “if” certain conditions are satisfied, — all progress and change by evolution depends upon an “if” which

<sup>23</sup> See *Entretiens* 1929. The original English (page 36) is: “Death as a fact has been attached to all life upon earth.”

<sup>24</sup> Page 36: “If this belief could be cast out first from the conscious mind... death would no longer be inevitable.”

gets satisfied. If the animal mind had not been pushed to develop speech and reason, mental man would never have come into existence, — but the “if”, — a stupendous and formidable one, was satisfied. So with the “ifs” that condition a farther progress.

*“Many people would tell you wonderful tales of how the world was built and how it will proceed in the future, how and where you were born in the past and what you will be hereafter, the lives you have lived and the lives you will still live. All this has nothing to do with spiritual life.”<sup>25</sup>*

*Is what such people say a complete humbug? Is there a process other than the spiritual by which one can know all these things?*

Often it is, but even if it is correct, it has nothing spiritual in it. Many mediums, clairvoyants or people with a special faculty, tell you these things. That faculty is no more spiritual than the capacity to build a bridge or to cook a nice dish or to solve a mathematical problem. There are intellectual capacities, there are occult capacities — that is all.

*“They [vampires] are not human; there is only a human form or appearance.... Their method is to try first to cast their influence upon a man; then they enter slowly into his atmosphere and in the end may get complete possession of him, driving out entirely the real human soul and personality.”<sup>26</sup>*

*X has married a girl who, the Mother has said, is vampire-like to some extent. Is he then under all these risks? What precautions should he take? Shall I warn him?*

First of all what is meant is not that the vampire or vital being even

<sup>25</sup> Page 40.    <sup>26</sup> Page 42.

## Questions and Answers

in possession of a human body tries to possess yet another human being. All that is the description of how a disembodied (vampire) vital being takes possession of a human body without being born into it in the ordinary way — for that is their desire, to possess a human body but not by the way of birth. Once thus human, the danger they are for others is that they feed on the vitality of those who are in contact with them — that is all.

Secondly in this case, Mother only said vampire-like to some extent. That does not mean that she is one of these beings, but has to some extent the habit of feeding on the vitality of others. There is no need to say anything to X. It would only disturb him and not help in the least.

*The Mother speaks of the power of thoughts and gives the example that if “you have a keen desire for a certain person to come and that, along with this vital impulse of desire, a strong imagination accompanies the mental formation you have made.... And if there is a sufficient power of will in your thought-form, if it is a well-built formation, it will arrive at its own realisation.”<sup>27</sup>*

*In the example given, suppose there is no strong desire in the vital but only thoughts or vague imaginations in the mind, would that go and induce the person to come?*

It might; especially if that person were himself desirous of coming, it could give the decisive push. But in most cases desire or will behind the thought-force would be necessary.

*The Mother says that depression or discouragement cuts holes in the nervous envelope and makes hostile attacks more easy.<sup>28</sup> In one sense this means that a man with goodwill should not discourage anyone’s wrong ideas,*

<sup>27</sup> Pages 50-51.    <sup>28</sup> Page 89.

*impulses or movements. But would this not be against the principles in ordinary life as well as in Sadhana? There is the way of keeping silent when dealing with such people, but even that sometimes hurts them more than a point-blank discouragement.*

*Would the bad effects of depression and discouragement indicated by the Mother happen in ordinary life also?*

The knowledge about the bad effect of depressions is meant for the Sadhak to learn to avoid these things. He cannot expect people to flatter his failures or mistakes or indulge his foibles merely because he has the self-habit of indulging in depression and hurting his nervous envelope if that is done. To keep himself free from depression is his business, not that of others. For instance some people have the habit of getting into depression if the Mother does not comply with their desires — it does not follow that the Mother must comply with their desires in order to keep them jolly — they must learn to get rid of this habit of mind. So with people's wish of encouragement or praise for all they do. One can be silent or non-intervening, but if even that depresses them, it is their own fault and nobody else's.

Of course, it is the same in ordinary life — depression is always hurtful. But in Sadhana it is more serious because it becomes a strong obstacle to the smooth and rapid progress towards the goal.