

14 May 1951

“Chance can only be the opposite of order and harmony. There is only one true harmony and that is the supramental — the reign of Truth, the expression of the Divine Law. In the Supermind, therefore, chance has no place. But in the lower Nature, the supreme Truth is obscured: hence there is an absence of that divine unity of purpose and action which alone can constitute order. Lacking this unity, the domain of the lower Nature is governed by what we may call chance — that is to say, it is a field in which various conflicting forces intermix, having no single definite aim.”

“Chance”, Questions and Answers 1929-31

If chance is the expression of disorder in the lower worlds, still there are “happy” chances which are not necessarily the expression of a disorder, aren’t there?

Happy for whom? For generally in this world as we see it, what is happy for one is unhappy for another; what is happy in one case is unhappy in another, and that too is an expression of disorder. I don’t say that necessarily it is a chance occurrence which makes you unhappy, I say that it does not correspond to the order of truths, which is very different. One may be very happy in the midst of disorder! There are many who are perfectly satisfied with their disorder and would not like to change it.

A happy chance may come from a set of circumstances which harm nobody.

We do not see it harming anyone or anything simply because we do not have sufficient data. We cannot judge circumstances, for

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we do not know the world. What do we know about it? Our vision is so short and so limited. Just think, a man can never know what lies beyond his hundred and twenty years, at the maximum, and I am putting a very big limit, and I count the first years of his existence, though generally he does not remember what has happened then. What does one know about the world in so short a time and about the consequences of things? Nothing at all. And even if we assume that one can remember sufficiently well to know the result or antecedent of a so-called “chance”, it is altogether a local knowledge. What does one know about what is happening at the antipodes or in a million other places on the earth at the same moment? We know nothing about it. And as we know that all that happens is linked, that all things are closely linked, consciously, that there cannot be a vibration in one place without there being its consequences in another, how can we tell whether our chance is not harmful to someone, though it be favourable for us? I think it is impossible to form a judgment (how shall I put it?) a correct judgment about things, for one does not know what is going on in the world. We do not know the whole, we know nothing of the play of forces. And we say that chance is the result of a play of forces; only, instead of being the expression of divine harmony, it is the expression of conflicting wills. These wills are not all necessarily bad or hostile but they are always ignorant. Each one tries to realise his own will and the victory is to the strongest — the strongest is not necessarily the best in this field. When one thing is realised, how many others could have been realised, which were not, because this one was realised? And all these things, we do not know. We cannot compare what is with what could have been.... No, I have not said anywhere that chance was necessarily the work of hostile forces, but it is certainly the work of ignorant forces.

From a scientific point of view chance is considered as something without a cause or as the result of a number of small causes which intervene and are more or less

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independent of each other, giving rise to the notion of disorder. But how to know whether a thing, an event, etc. is due to chance or not? The word “chance” is rather a way of speaking, isn’t it?

But that is exactly what I am saying! I never said that chance did not have a cause. You say that a thing is due to “chance” because you cannot discern all the causes which have brought about that thing. But one who is in contact with the divine truth can know very well if it came from there or not — quite easily.

But for one who can follow causes and effects...

Excuse me, we have given a definition, we have said that unless an event is the result of the intervention of the divine Will expressed without mixture, it is a question of what we call “chance”.

Then in the ordinary world many things are due to chance.

But of course, I have not said anything else! In the ordinary world all is the reign of chance, except, from time to time, something of which the cause is indiscernible to the crowd but discernible to one who is in touch with the divine Will. That alone escapes chance — this does not happen very, very often, so it is not too risky to say that all things in this world happen through chance.

We are here then by chance?

One cannot generalise. Nor can one ask personal questions. So we shall say vaguely that for some it is a chance event, but for others it is a divine Will.

Even in the ordinary world it is not only chance which acts. Thus for the molecules of hot gas there are two

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movements which seem to be superimposed: a disorderly movement and a combined movement. Probably we may then say that the happenings of the ordinary world are a mixture of these two movements: a disorderly movement and a combined movement which aims at a fixed goal?

You have found that all by yourself!

You have said in the same talk: "Peace has been given to you several times and often you lost it...."

"Chance", Questions and Answers 1929-31

Yes, how many times has peace been given to you and how many times have you lost it? Innumerable times, I have said. Divine peace, not only ordinary peace (because, for ordinary peace, I believe you may go around the world several times without finding it) but divine peace has been given to you and every time you have lost it. Why? Because something in you refuses to give up its petty selfish routine.

But divine peace is always there, isn't it? It is not "given"?

You must not forget that when I said that, we were a small group of twelve to sixteen, gathering regularly, and it was to these I was speaking. I never thought I would be reading this to more than fifty people, never. But I said this positively to those who were there, in that little group, those to whom I had given this peace innumerable times, and every time they had lost it. That is what I mean, it was something altogether particular. Now, generally speaking, for those who are here, one may say as you do that peace is constantly given (as also consciousness, force, knowledge) to a certain extent, as much as the mind is able to receive it. So it can no longer be said that it is "lost"; but one becomes aware of it, then unaware, and again aware,

then again unaware; quite simply for a reason similar to the one I have given (for it is always true, whether there are sixteen or eighteen or a hundred and fifty or seven hundred, the reason is almost the same) — that even when you are well-intentioned there is something in the being which clings desperately to its habits. People imagine that if something has changed in their little outer habits, they have made a great progress; they tell you, “But don’t you see? I travel, I change my environment, change circumstances and I adapt myself very well.” All that means nothing at all. It is the inner habits, the inner reactions, the inner way of seeing, the way of thinking, of directing one’s action, it is this which refuses to change, which finds it so difficult to change.

When you speak of “giving peace” do you refer to a special gift or to something general?

It is special, it is something put upon you, with insistence, and then, for some seconds or some minutes, or even some hours, you feel it. You feel suddenly filled with peace, force, light — sometimes even with yet more precious things: knowledge, consciousness, love. And then, it disappears. Then you say, “Oh! Truly, these divine forces are not generous. They make you taste the thing to see how good it is, then take it away from you so that you may desire it all the more!” This is the usual conclusion.

Yet we know the causes which prevent us from keeping the given peace and we try to get rid of these obstacles.

And so you enter into a terrible battle and lose the peace still more!... You mean that when one loses the contact and makes an effort, one manages to get rid of the obstacle? That happens only when you are truly a first class sadhak! There are not many who do that. Those who do it I must congratulate, for they will go very fast. But there are not many who know the cause — I have

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told you that — ninety-nine times out of a hundred it is the poor Divine who is guilty: it is He who has given and then withdrawn what He gave; He is quite whimsical. He makes you taste of the wonderful fruit like that, then He takes it away from you, and then when He feels like it, He gives it back to you.... Indeed, He is quite a fanciful personage!

Instead of giving peace, why doesn't the Divine abolish all at once the ego?

Ah! That, that is the work for each one. That is what I told you the other day, I read to you what Sri Aurobindo has written: "Do not harbour the indolent illusion that you will be given the aspiration and the work will be done for you." The aspiration must come from you and the abolition of the ego also. You are helped, you are supported; every time you take a step forward you will feel there is something which gives you all that is necessary to enable you to take the step, but it is you who must walk, no one will take you on his back and carry you.... Abolish the ego first, that's a wonderful programme! Once the ego is abolished, there will be nothing more to do, all the work will be over, for it is precisely the ego which impedes you from being in touch with the Divine. Once the ego is gone, quite simply you will be like that, in a beatific union with the Divine, and all the work will be over. But generally, one does not begin by the end. In any case, what I have just told you holds good: to abolish the ego is your work. You will be helped, but you must walk on your own feet. Do not at all hope that someone is going to carry you on his back and that you will have nothing to do except let yourself be carried.