

Questions and Answers

generally, “Yes, yes, I like to learn!” but if one really likes to learn, there isn’t a class in which one could not learn. Surely, whatever the class, there is always something one does not know, one can always learn. You are not a living encyclopaedia! Even if you go over the same book again (this happens, I believe, in some classes), and you may say: “Oh! I have already gone through this book, this is boring”, but that’s simply because you do not want to learn: because certainly if you repeat the same book, it means that you have not learnt it properly the first time and you must take particular care to learn what you have not learnt. Even a book of grammar! I do not say that books of grammar are very exciting, but even a grammar-book becomes interesting if you set out to learn it—even the most abstract rules of grammar. You cannot imagine how amusing it is when you truly want to learn, when you want to understand why it is so; instead of just committing to memory, learning by heart, if you want to understand: what are these words put there? For what idea, what real knowledge are they put there? What do they represent?... Any rule whatsoever is simply a human mental formula of something that exists in itself. Take any rule at all, it shows simply that a few heads have made an effort to formulate in the way most clear to them, most condensed, something which exists in itself. So if one goes behind the words and begins searching for this something—the thing existing in itself, which is there, behind the words—how interesting it becomes! It is throbbing, thrilling! It is like passing through a jungle to discover a new country, like going on an exploration to the North Pole! So, if you do that with the laws of grammar, I assure you nothing in the world can bore you afterwards.

Understand instead of learning.

I admit this asks for a very great concentration. It demands a concentration capable of penetrating, digging a hole into the mental shell and passing through to the other side. And afterwards, it becomes worth the trouble.... You have been pushed against something cold, rigid, hard, unelastic. Then you concen-